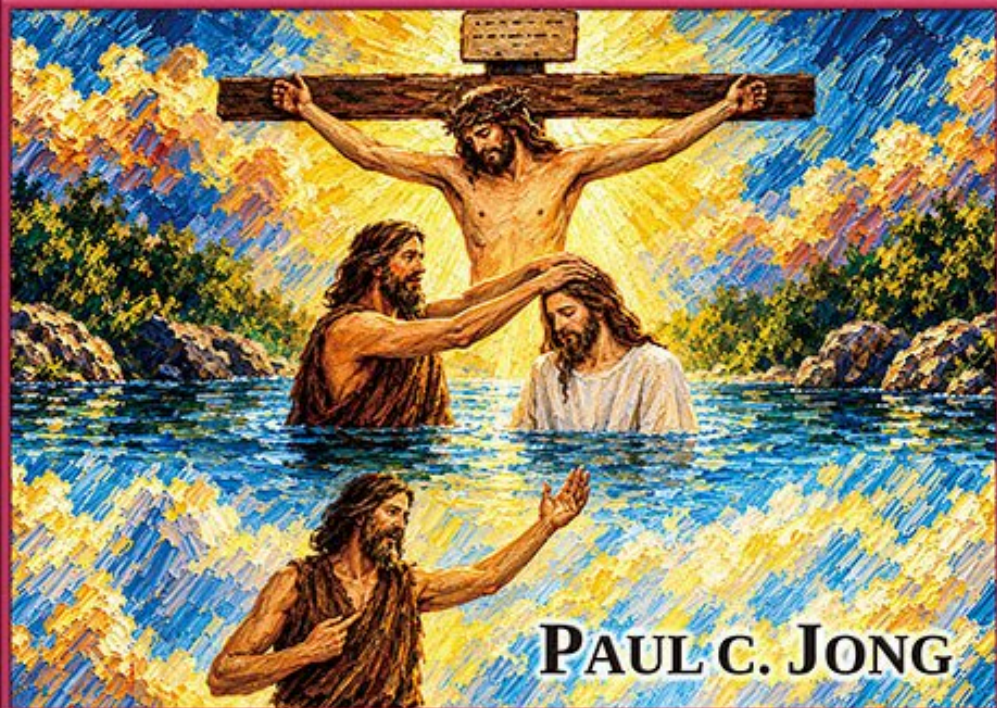


*Biblical Exposition
& Sermons*

John

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



PAUL C. JONG



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

**Biblical Exposition
& Sermons**



Hepshatiah

**“Behold! The Lamb of God
who takes away the sin of the
world!”**

(John 1:29)

The Gospel of John clearly testifies to who Jesus is. He is not merely a teacher or a prophet; He is God who is the Word, who has been with God from the beginning, and He is the Son of God, who came to this earth clothed in flesh.

By being baptized by John the Baptist, the representative of mankind, Jesus once and for all received all the sins of all the people in the world as they were passed on to Him, bore those sins and was judged on the Cross, and, rising from the dead, accomplished perfect salvation. The testimony of John the Baptist is the testimony of salvation that reveals how my sins were transferred to Jesus.

Every word, sign, and testimony in the Gospel of John leads us by faith to the gospel of the water and the Spirit, which has saved us from all sins.



*This is a book that everyone must seek out
and read now,
before the Antichrist appears,
as this world is heading toward destruction.
You must believe now.*

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John

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

PAUL C. JONG



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**A Ministry of THE NEW LIFE MISSION
SEOUL, KOREA**

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

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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



Remission of sins



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Preface

“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).

Through this word, the Gospel of John clearly reveals the purpose of its writing. This Gospel calls us to know who Jesus is and, by believing in the heart the salvation He accomplished, to have life. Therefore, to read the Gospel of John is a journey of faith in which we meet the Lord of life and accept as our own salvation the salvation He accomplished with the water and the Spirit.

The Gospel of John begins at a point farther back than the manger of Bethlehem, that is, at the beginning. It testifies that the Word who was from the beginning is God, that all things were made through Him, and that this Word became flesh and dwelt among us. Before this majestic declaration we come face to face with the most fundamental questions: Who is Jesus Christ, and how did He save us from sin?

Who is Jesus Christ?

Jesus is not merely an excellent teacher or a prophet who performed mighty works. He is the Creator God who made all things, and the Savior who took on human flesh and came to this earth to deliver us from sin. By receiving baptism from John the Baptist, Jesus took upon Himself all the sin of mankind; bearing that sin, He was judged on the Cross; and He rose from the dead and gave us new life. This is the perfect salvation that Jesus

accomplished with the water and the Spirit.

All the signs, words, and encounters recorded in the Gospel of John converge as testimony that reveals Jesus Christ and the salvation He accomplished. Therefore, to read the Gospel of John rightly, we must not stop at the events themselves, but look at Jesus Christ who was revealed through those events. We must also believe in the heart that Jesus is the Son of God, and believe in the heart that all our sins were washed away by the baptism He received from John, the Cross, and the resurrection. By this faith that believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, a person receives the remission of sin, is born again, becomes a child of God, and receives eternal life.

Following the testimony into life

Volume 1 of this book covers the General Introduction, needed in order to understand the whole Gospel of John, as well as the word in chapters 1 to 5 of the Gospel of John. The General Introduction examines the writer of the Gospel of John and the background of its writing, its purpose and central themes, its literary and theological characteristics, and its overall structure. It also examines its relationship with the Synoptic Gospels, the Epistles of John, and the Book of Revelation, and how the prophecies and types of the Old Testament are fulfilled and revealed in the Gospel of John. This process is not merely for acquiring background knowledge about the Gospel of John; it is the way to realize by faith how the whole of the Scriptures testifies of Jesus Christ and the salvation He accomplished with the water and the Spirit.

In chapter 1, we meet God who is the Word and Jesus Christ who is the true Light, and following the testimony of John the

Baptist, we look at the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world. Because Jesus had the sins of all the people of the world transferred to Him when He received baptism from John, He was able to bear the sin of the world and go to the Cross. When we believe this fact in the heart, the testimony of John the Baptist is not a record of an event of the past, but the testimony of salvation that reveals how our sins passed on to Jesus. Also, through the way those who heard that testimony followed Jesus and led their own brothers and neighbors to the Lord, we learn that the faith that believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit begins with hearing the word and is passed on again to other souls.

In chapter 2, we encounter the first sign performed at the wedding at Cana and the event of the cleansing of the temple. Where the wine ran out, the insufficiency of man is exposed, but when we believe and obey the word of the Lord, His glory is revealed. Then Jesus spoke of His body using the temple as a figure, revealing beforehand that He would die on the cross and rise again in three days. In this way, the signs point to Jesus Christ, who became the sacrifice for us who had lost our lives because of sin and who gives us new life.

In chapter 3, we enter the center of faith through the questions of Nicodemus, who came to Jesus by night. Even if one has religious status and much knowledge of the Scriptures, unless one is born again of water and the Spirit, one cannot see the kingdom of God. Being born again is not a change achieved by human effort or self-cultivation, nor is it achieved merely by vaguely respecting Jesus or acknowledging Him as the Son of God. When a person believes in the heart the word that Jesus took charge of all the sins of mankind once and for all with the baptism He received from John, received the judgment of those sins on the Cross, and rose from the dead and accomplished

perfect salvation, that person is born again of water and the Spirit. The word “*For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son*” reveals that the love of God is not a vague feeling but the work of salvation that actually removed our sins through His only begotten Son.

In chapter 4, we meet Jesus, who went in person to the land of Samaria, which the Jews kept away from. The Lord does not turn away from one thirsty soul, but promises living water springing up into everlasting life. The heart that was not filled by the things of the world is made new when it meets the Savior and believes His word. The woman who left her waterpot testifies to the people of the Christ she had met. Here we learn what worship in spirit and truth is, what the harvest of souls is, and what the faith is that accepts the word of the Lord before any visible sign.

In chapter 5, we meet the Lord who asks the man who had long been sick at Bethesda, “*Do you want to be made well?*” and raises him up. We also hear the gospel that the person who hears the word of the Son and believes in Him who sent the Son has passed from death into life. Finally, Jesus says, “*These are they which testify of Me.*” If one reads the Scriptures diligently but does not go forward to the faith that believes in Jesus, of whom the Scriptures testify, and in the gospel of the water and the Spirit that He accomplished, one cannot have life. The purpose of searching the Scriptures is to discover that Jesus Christ removed all our sins with His baptism, the Cross, and the resurrection, and to believe this salvation in the heart.

The way to read this book

This book is arranged so that the word of John chapters 1 to 5 may be examined through ‘Biblical Exposition,’ ‘Questions and Answers,’ and the sermons of Pastor Paul C. Jong. The Biblical Exposition follows the flow of the text of each chapter and unfolds in turn the meaning conveyed by its events, conversations, and teachings. In this process it examines the related words of the Old and New Testaments together, and reveals what each text testifies concerning Jesus Christ and what salvation He accomplished with the water and the Spirit. It guides the reader not to stop at understanding the content, but to believe in the heart that all his sins passed on to Jesus through the baptism He received from John, and that the judgment of sin and salvation were completely accomplished through His death on the Cross and His resurrection. It is also arranged so that the reader may think together about how the faith that has received the remission of sin by believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit must be carried on into today’s life and into the preaching of the gospel. In ‘Questions and Answers,’ the reader concisely and concretely confirms the main verses and themes of each chapter, looks back on his own faith before the word, and puts the content of the Biblical Exposition in order once more. The sermons of Pastor Paul C. Jong that follow show vividly how the gospel of the water and the Spirit has been proclaimed, believed, and passed on in the actual lives of the Church and the saints.

The Gospel of John does not leave us as spectators of the word. It makes us hear the invitation of the Lord who said, “*Come and see*”; it brings us to the confession of faith, “*We have found the Messiah*”; and it establishes us as witnesses who preach the gospel of life to others. I hope that everyone who

opens this book will not stop at knowing words about Jesus, but will meet Him, the Creator and Savior, through the word. And I hope that each one will believe in the heart the fact that when Jesus received baptism, all his sins passed on to Him, and that the Lord bore those sins, was judged on the Cross, and then rose from the dead and thereby completely saved him.

I hope that you will honestly lay your insufficiency and thirst before the Lord, and rely not on your own deeds or religious zeal but on the righteous work of salvation that Jesus has already accomplished. I hope that you will believe in your heart in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, be washed of all sins, receive the Holy Spirit as a gift, and enjoy the joy of living as a child of God. I also hope that this faith and joy will not stay in the heart of one person alone, but will flow out to the family, the Church, and the world.

I hope that this first volume will be a guide that helps you, the readers, understand the word of the Gospel of John more deeply and believe clearly in the gospel of the water and the Spirit revealed in it. I hope that everything contained in this book will exalt only the name of Jesus Christ and lead you, the readers, to Him, of whom the Scriptures testify. And so I earnestly hope that you will believe in the heart that Jesus Christ took charge of all our sins with the baptism He received from John, received the judgment of those sins on the Cross, and then rose again and completed salvation, and that you will receive the remission of sin and eternal life. ☒

CONTENTS

Preface ----- 7

General Introduction ----- 19

John Chapter 1

• Biblical Exposition

John Chapter 1 seen from the perspective of the gospel
of the water and the Spirit ----- 61

• Questions and Answers ----- 93

• Paul C. Jong's Sermons

God who revealed Himself by His word
(John 1:1–13)----- 109

The true gospel that the Apostle John testifies of
(John 1:6–13)----- 126

Jesus Christ is the Lord of life
(John 1:6–12)----- 139

The Lord who gave us the living hope of the resurrection
(John 1:14–18) ----- 152

The testimony of the one sent from God
(John 1:29–36) ----- 162

Those who became disciples through the testimony
of John the Baptist (John 1:37–42)----- 180

John Chapter 2

• Biblical Exposition

John Chapter 2 seen from the perspective of the gospel
of the water and the Spirit ----- 193

• Questions and Answers----- 207

• Paul C. Jong's Sermons

Believe the word given to the Church
and experience the work of God
(John 2:1–11)----- 221

Learn true faith through those who have gone ahead
(John 2:1–11)----- 233

Fill your heart full of the word of God
(John 2:1–10)----- 244

The wine of the wedding feast,
a life of faith better later than at the beginning
(John 2:1–11)----- 254

John Chapter 3

• Biblical Exposition

John Chapter 3 seen from the perspective of the gospel
of the water and the Spirit ----- 269

• Questions and Answers----- 289

• Paul C. Jong's Sermons

You must surely believe the true love of the Lord and be born again (John 3:1–15) -----	307
Engrave the unchanging love of the Lord on your heart (John 3:1–17)-----	321
Only the water, the blood, and the Spirit are the truth of being born again (John 3:1–18) -----	330
Jesus Christ, the true Light (John 3:16–21) -----	342

John Chapter 4

• Biblical Exposition

John Chapter 4 seen from the perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit -----	359
---	-----

• Questions and Answers----- 385

• Paul C. Jong's Sermons

The one who worships in spirit and truth (John 4:1–24)-----	400
Salvation that comes through faith, not the law (John 4:1–26)-----	411
The living water that never lets one thirst again (John 4:13–26, 4:39–42)-----	444

Many more believed because of His word	
(John 4:27–42) -----	469
Jesus, who accomplished the work of removing our sins	
(John 4:27–42) -----	483

John Chapter 5

• Biblical Exposition

John Chapter 5 seen from the perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit -----	495
---	-----

• Questions and Answers ----- 514

• Paul C. Jong’s Sermons

Our sinful true self	
(John 5:1–9) -----	530
The sick people by the pool of Bethesda	
(John 5:1–9) -----	552
A person with sin must meet Jesus the Savior	
(John 5:1–15) -----	573
Jesus Christ, who performed the office of the eternal Priest	
(John 5:24–29) -----	587
Jesus Christ, who is God, the only One whom we believe in and rely on	
(John 5:39–47) -----	600

General Introduction

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General Introduction

Who is the author of the Gospel of John?

The author of the Gospel of John is the Apostle John, the son of Zebedee. He was one of the twelve disciples of Jesus, and he witnessed the Lord's ministry, the Cross, and the resurrection with his own eyes. The figure who appears in this Gospel as 'the disciple whom Jesus loved' is none other than the Apostle John, and John 21:24 makes it clear that he is the disciple who testified of these things and wrote them down.

Rather than putting himself forward, John concentrated on testifying of the Jesus Christ he had seen and heard. Therefore, the Gospel of John is not a book that gathered up later conjectures or religious legends; it is a Gospel written under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit by an apostle who lived with Jesus and witnessed His death and resurrection.

The Gospel of John is the direct testimony of an apostle who lived with Jesus and saw His glory, and it is the word of God written so that we may believe in Jesus Christ and have life.

What kind of life and character did the Apostle John have?

The Apostle John was the son of Zebedee and the brother of James. He had been living as a fisherman in Galilee when he was called by Jesus, and he left everything behind and followed the Lord (Matthew 4:21–22; Mark 1:19–20). Jesus gave James and John the name "*Sons of Thunder*" (Mark 3:17). In fact, John

showed a hasty and strong character to the point of asking for fire to come down on a Samaritan village that did not receive Jesus (Luke 9:51–55), and together with his brother James he even sought a high position (Mark 10:35–41).

But as John walked with Jesus, he was changed into an apostle who knew love. Together with Peter and James, he was one of the core disciples who accompanied Jesus to the scene where the daughter of Jairus, the ruler of the synagogue, came back to life, to the Mount of Transfiguration, and to the Garden of Gethsemane (Mark 5:37; 9:2; 14:33). At the Last Supper he leaned on Jesus' bosom, and beside the Cross he was entrusted with Jesus' mother (John 13:23; 19:26–27).

After the resurrection he served as a leader of the Church together with Peter, and Paul also recognized him as a worker who was like a pillar of the Church (Acts 3:1–4:22; 8:14–17; Galatians 2:9). At first he was a son of thunder, but in the end he became the apostle of love who testified most deeply of the love of God and of the mutual love of the saints.

When was the Gospel of John written?

The exact date when the Gospel of John was written cannot be known. This is because the Gospel itself does not state the year in which it was written. Therefore, one must not speak of a specific year as though it were an established fact of the Scriptures.

What is clear is the fact that John, after witnessing the public ministry, the Cross, and the resurrection of Jesus with his own eyes, left that testimony to the Church and to all readers. The Gospel of John is not a chronicle that tries to record all the deeds of Jesus in order of time without omission; it is a testimony

written with the purpose of making people believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and have life (John 20:30–31).

Therefore, rather than fixing the date of the Gospel of John as a specific year or range of years, it is accurate to stay with the fact that the Apostle John, who witnessed the public ministry, the Cross, and the resurrection of Jesus, wrote down that testimony.

Where was the Gospel of John written?

The place where the Gospel of John was written is not specified in the Scriptures. Therefore, no particular city can be fixed as the established place where the Gospel of John was written.

What is more important than the place of writing is the point that the testimony of this Gospel is not confined to any one city or people. John explains the feasts and customs of the Jews, translates Hebrew and Aramaic terms, and brings Jews, Samaritans, and Greeks alike before Jesus. Therefore, even if the Gospel of John was written in a specific region, it is a Gospel given so that all peoples may believe in Jesus Christ and have life.

Who are the readers the Gospel of John had in mind?

The readers of the Gospel of John are all the people who must believe in Jesus Christ and have life. The Gospel does not present the name of a specific individual or of one church as its recipient. Instead, it clearly states its purpose of writing: “*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 text contains explanations not only for people familiar with the feasts and the Law of the Jews but also for readers who do not know those customs (John 1:38, 41–42; 4:9; 5:2). Also, a Jewish leader like Nicodemus, the Samaritan woman, the nobleman, the Greeks, and Pilate the Roman governor all come face to face with Jesus. This shows that the Gospel of John is a universal Gospel that calls Jews and Gentiles together.

The purpose of this Gospel is to make the faith of those who already believe even firmer, and to lead those who do not yet believe to know who Jesus is and to have life.

What is the political, religious, and social background of the Gospel of John?

The historical stage of the Gospel of John is the age when Rome ruled over Judea. In Judea there were rulers and troops set up by Rome, and the trial and crucifixion of Jesus also took place under the authority of Pilate, the Roman governor. Among the people there was an expectation of a political Messiah who would set them free from the rule of Rome, but Jesus declared that His kingdom was not of this world (John 6:15; 18:36).

Religiously, the temple in Jerusalem, the Sabbath, and the feasts such as the Passover, the Feast of Tabernacles, and the Feast of Dedication dominated the lives of the people. The chief priests and the Pharisees held great authority, and when Jesus healed the sick on the Sabbath and called God His own Father, they opposed Him (John 5:16–18). But Jesus revealed that He Himself was the true substance to which the temple, the feasts,

and the sacrifices had been pointing. He is the true temple, the bread of life, the light of the world, and the Savior who gives living water to those who thirst.

Socially, the Gospel of John shows the reality that Jews and Samaritans had no dealings with each other, people who feared being put out of the synagogue, and those who suffered at the margins of society, like the man who had been sick for a long time and the man blind from birth (John 4:9; 5:5–9; 9:18–23). Jesus went to them in the midst of these boundaries and fears, spoke to them and healed them, and revealed Himself as the Savior of the world. The Gospel of John proclaims that the right to become children of God is given not on the basis of lineage or status, but to those who receive Jesus and believe in Him (John 1:12).

What is the core purpose for which the Gospel of John was written?

The purpose of the Gospel of John is to make people believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and to make those who believe have life in His name.

“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).

John did not record all the things Jesus did; he selected and recorded the signs and the words that reveal His divinity and His work of salvation. The signs are not meant to boast of the miracles themselves; they point to who Jesus is. The words make the reader believe through the written testimony even though he has not seen Jesus with his eyes.

The Jesus of whom John testifies is the Savior who received

baptism from John the Baptist and took charge of the sin of the world, who bore that sin and was judged on the Cross, and who rose from the dead. Therefore, to read the Gospel of John rightly is not to stop at acknowledging the power of Jesus, but to believe in the salvation He accomplished and receive the remission of sin and eternal life.

What are the central theme and message of the Gospel of John?

The central theme of the Gospel of John is receiving the remission of sin and eternal life by believing in Jesus Christ, the Son of God who came in the flesh. John proclaims that Jesus is not merely a teacher or a prophet, but the Word who was with God from the beginning and who is God (John 1:1). That Word created all things, is the source of life and light, and became flesh and came among people (John 1:3–4, 14).

The divinity and the incarnation of Jesus are not separated from His work of salvation. Jesus, the Son of God, appeared as the Lamb of God who took charge of the sin of the world through the baptism He received from John the Baptist (John 1:29–34), declared on the Cross, “*It is finished!*” (John 19:30) and rose from the dead and revealed that He is the Lord of life. The person who believes this gospel passes from condemnation into life and becomes a child of God.

Throughout the whole Gospel of John, the themes of the Word, life, light, faith, glory, truth, love, and testimony flow in connection with one another. At their center there is always Jesus Christ. To know Jesus is to know God, to believe in Jesus is the way to receive eternal life, and to abide in Jesus is the source of a fruitful life.

What is the key verse of the Gospel of John?

When the whole Gospel of John is summarized in one verse, the key verse is John 20:31.

“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 verse immediately before it states that Jesus also did many other signs that are not written in this book (John 20:30). Therefore, John 20:31 is not a simple conclusion; it is the interpretive key to the whole Gospel of John, revealing what was recorded out of so many events and why. From the sign at Cana to the confession of faith of Thomas, all the signs, words, and conversations, and the testimony of the Cross and the resurrection, have the purpose of revealing who Jesus is so that people may believe.

This verse shows together the content, the channel, and the result of faith. The content of faith is the fact that Jesus is the Son of God and the Christ. Here, the Son of God means that Jesus is the Son who is God, and the Christ means that He is the King and Savior sent to save sinners. The Christ of whom John testifies is Jesus, who came in the flesh, took charge of the sin of the world with the baptism He received from John the Baptist, was judged on the Cross, and rose from the dead. The channel of faith is the written word and testimony. It is not to stop at trying to confirm with the eyes, as Thomas did, but to accept the written word and believe in Jesus as my Lord and my God. The result is the life received in the name of Jesus. This life does not simply mean the blessings of this present world; it is the new life that the person who has received the remission of sin gains by being united with the Lord, it is eternal life, and it is the life of the final resurrection.

The key verse that shows most clearly the heart of God and His act of salvation behind this purpose of writing is John 3:16.

“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).

The love of God did not stop at a vague feeling or at words. God loved the world that would perish because of sin and actually gave His only begotten Son, and the only begotten Son saved sinners with His baptism, the Cross, and the resurrection. The following verse 17 also states that the purpose for which God sent His Son was not to condemn the world but to have the world saved through the Son. Therefore, the person who believes in Jesus is delivered from perishing and receives eternal life, but the person who does not believe rejects the light and the salvation that have already come and remains under condemnation.

If John 20:31 answers the question “Why did John write this Gospel?” then John 3:16 answers the question “Why did God send His only begotten Son?” The two verses are connected as one. God loved the world and gave His only begotten Son; John testified that this only begotten Son, Jesus, is the Christ, the Son of God; and the person who believes that testimony does not perish but receives eternal life in the name of Jesus. Therefore, the central key verse of the Gospel of John is 20:31, and the key verse that shows that saving love in the most condensed form is 3:16.

What are the literary and theological characteristics of the Gospel of John?

The most striking characteristic of the Gospel of John is that

it testifies very clearly of the divinity and the work of salvation of Jesus. The Gospel begins with the declaration “*the Word was God*” (*John 1:1*) and reaches its climax with the confession of Thomas to the risen Jesus, “*My Lord and my God!*” (*John 20:28*).

The main characteristics are as follows.

1. Testimony through signs—turning water into wine, healing the nobleman’s son, healing the sick man at Bethesda, the five loaves and two fish, walking on the water, healing the man blind from birth, and raising Lazarus reveal the glory and the identity of Jesus. These are commonly classified as the seven signs, but John states that Jesus did many other signs besides these (*John 20:30*).

2. Self-revelation in the form of ‘I am ...’—Jesus declares that He is the bread of life; the light of the world; the door of the sheep; the good shepherd; the resurrection and the life; the way, the truth, and the life; and the true vine.

3. A succession of testimonies—John the Baptist, the Scriptures, the words and works of Jesus, God the Father, the Holy Spirit, and the disciples testify of Jesus.

4. The contrasts of light and darkness, life and death, above and below, faith and unbelief—the reader cannot remain neutral, but stands before the choice of believing in Jesus or rejecting Him.

5. Conversations that move from misunderstanding to revelation—Nicodemus understands being born again as physical birth, the Samaritan woman understands living water as well water, and the disciples understand the food of which Jesus speaks as physical food. Through such misunderstandings Jesus reveals spiritual truth.

6. The fulfillment of the feasts and the temple—Jesus appears as the true temple, the bread that came down from

heaven, the light of the world, and the source of living water.

7. The Holy Spirit and the community of disciples—the Holy Spirit, the Helper, testifies of Jesus, brings His words to remembrance, and guides the disciples into the truth.

8. Love and abiding—the disciple who abides in Jesus bears fruit, and the disciples love one another as the Lord loved them.

The Gospel of John is not a simple collection of miracle stories or an abstract book of theology. It is the testimony of the gospel that, through His signs and words, calls people to believe in Jesus and have life.

Summarize the entire content of the Gospel of John

The Gospel of John testifies of who Jesus is, what He accomplished for sinners, and what life He gives to those who believe in Him. The Gospel begins with the declaration that the Word, who was with God from the beginning and who is God, made all things, and that in Him were life and light. That Word became flesh and came among people. John the Baptist makes it clear that he himself is not the Christ but a witness who prepares His way, and he testifies that Jesus is the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world, and that He is the Son of God. After taking charge of the sin of the world through His baptism, Jesus calls His disciples, and at the wedding at Cana He reveals His glory with His first sign of turning water into wine. He then cleanses the temple and reveals beforehand that His body is the true temple that would die and rise again (John chapters 1–2).

Jesus teaches Nicodemus that a person must be born of water and the Spirit in order to enter the kingdom of God. God loved the world and gave His only begotten Son, and the person who

believes in that Son does not perish but receives eternal life. In Samaria He promises the woman who had been living in sin and thirst that He will give her living water springing up into everlasting life, and He says that true worship is offered in spirit and truth. The woman and the Samaritans come to believe that Jesus is indeed the Savior of the world. Jesus heals the nobleman's son with His word alone and reveals the authority of the word that gives life (John chapters 3–4).

After healing the sick man at Bethesda, He reveals that God the Father and He Himself work together, and that the Son is God, equal with the Father who has the authority to raise the dead and to judge. After feeding the multitude with five loaves and two fish and walking on the sea, He teaches that He is the bread of life that came down from heaven, and that He gives eternal life to the person who accepts His flesh and His blood by faith. But many people, seeking only bread and signs, cannot accept that word and leave. At the Feast of Tabernacles He calls those who thirst and promises the Holy Spirit whom believers will receive as rivers of living water. He also declares that He is the light of the world, and that the person who abides in His word and knows the truth is set free from sin (John chapters 5–8).

Jesus opens the eyes of the man blind from birth, opening not only the eyes of his body but also the eyes of faith. The man who came to see believes in Jesus and worships Him, but the religious leaders who were confident that they knew are instead exposed as the spiritually blind. Jesus reveals that He is the good shepherd who lays down His life for the sheep and gives abundant life. Then, by calling the dead Lazarus out of the tomb, He reveals that He is the resurrection and the life, and the Son of God who raises from death those who believe in Him. After this great sign some people believed, but the religious leaders plot to kill Jesus (John chapters 9–11).

Facing death, Jesus receives Mary's anointing with fragrant oil and enters Jerusalem as King. When the Greeks seek Jesus, He says that a grain of wheat must fall into the ground and die in order to bear much fruit, and He foretells that He will be lifted up on the Cross and draw people to Himself. As those who do not believe even after seeing the many signs of Jesus and those who believe in Him and follow Him are clearly divided, His public ministry comes to an end (John chapter 12).

Jesus, loving His own to the end, washes the feet of His disciples and gives them a new commandment to love one another as He loved them. Even while foretelling Peter's denial, He does not abandon the disciples, and He says that He is the only way, the truth, and the life by which one goes to the Father. He also promises that another Helper, the Holy Spirit, will be with them forever, will bring the words of Jesus to their remembrance, will guide them into all truth, and will testify of Jesus. The disciple who abides in Jesus, the true vine, bears much fruit, and even while hated by the world the disciples love one another and testify of the gospel. Finally, Jesus prays to the Father that His disciples may be sanctified by the truth, be one in God, and be sent into the world (John chapters 13–17).

Jesus goes forward of His own accord before those who came to seize Him and is arrested, and He is interrogated before the high priest and Pilate. He tells Pilate that His kingdom is not of this world and that He is the King who came to testify to the truth. Jesus, who had no sin, is hung on the Cross in order to receive in our place the judgment of the sin of the world that He had taken charge of with the baptism He received from John the Baptist. After fulfilling the words of the Scriptures, He declares, "*It is finished!*" and dies, and He is buried by Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus (John chapters 18–19).

On the first day of the week Jesus rises from the dead. He

meets Mary Magdalene, appears to the disciples who had shut the doors in fear, gives them peace, tells them to receive the Holy Spirit, and sends them into the world. Seeing the risen Jesus, Thomas confesses, “*My Lord and my God!*” Jesus says that blessed is the person who believes through the written word without having seen. John states that the purpose for which he recorded these signs is to make people believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and to make those who believe have life in His name (John chapter 20).

Finally, the risen Jesus comes again to the disciples who had failed and were discouraged, at the shore of the Sea of Galilee. To those who had caught nothing all night, He gives a great catch of fish and feeds them Himself. Three times He asks Peter, who had denied the Lord three times, whether he loves Him, restores him, and commands him, “*Feed My sheep.*” In this way, the Gospel of John is the story of how the Word who is God came in the flesh, gave salvation and life to sinners with His baptism, the Cross, and the resurrection, and established those who believe in Him as disciples who live in love, in the Holy Spirit, and in the word, and who testify of the gospel (John chapter 21).

Present the overall structure of the Gospel of John

The Gospel of John can be divided into the following five parts according to the clear turning points in the text.

1. Prologue: The Word who became flesh—chapter 1, verses 1–18

It proclaims the Word, who was with God from the beginning and who is God. All things were created through Him, in Him were life and light, and that Word became flesh and dwelt

among people. It presents in condensed form the testimony of John the Baptist and the meaning of the incarnation, and closes the prologue with the declaration that the only begotten God, who is in the bosom of the Father, has revealed the invisible God. This prologue is the starting point that makes us read all the signs and words that follow from the perspective of the divinity, the life, the light, and the incarnation of Jesus.

2. The public ministry of Jesus through testimony and signs—chapter 1, verse 19 to chapter 12, verse 50

Beginning with the official testimony of John the Baptist, it reveals that Jesus is the Lamb of God and the Son of God. The first disciples follow Jesus, and Jesus performs His first sign at Cana and reveals His glory.

Chapter 1, verse 19 to chapter 2, verse 12: The first testimony, the first disciples, and the first sign—the testimony of John the Baptist, the calling of Andrew, Peter, Philip, and Nathanael, and the sign at the wedding at Cana are recorded.

Chapter 2, verse 13 to chapter 4, verse 54: The new temple, being born again, and living water—Jesus cleanses the temple and presents His death and resurrection as the sign of the true temple. He teaches Nicodemus the way of being born of water and the Spirit, teaches the Samaritan woman about the living water of eternal life and true worship, and heals the nobleman's son with His word.

Chapter 5, verse 1 to chapter 10, verse 42: The self-revelation of the Son of God who gives life—the healing of the sick man at Bethesda, the signs of the five loaves and two fish and of walking on the water, the teaching at the Feast of Tabernacles, and the healing of the man blind from birth follow. Jesus reveals Himself as the Son who works in equality with the Father, the bread of life, the light of the world, the One who gives

freedom through the truth, and the good shepherd who lays down His life for the sheep. As the signs and words are repeated, faith and unbelief, receiving and rejecting, are divided ever more clearly.

Chapter 11, verse 1 to chapter 12, verse 50: The raising of Lazarus and the conclusion of the public ministry—Jesus raises Lazarus and reveals that He is the resurrection and the life. Through this sign, people who believe arise, and at the same time the religious leaders decide to kill Jesus. Following Mary’s anointing with fragrant oil and the entry into Jerusalem, Jesus reveals that He will die like a grain of wheat and bear much fruit, and that He will be lifted up on the Cross and draw people to Himself. Chapter 12 concludes the public ministry by presenting together the people who did not believe even though Jesus had done many signs, and the last public call to believe in the light.

3. Love toward His own and the final teachings—chapter 13, verse 1 to chapter 17, verse 26

Chapter 13 begins a new major section with the declaration that Jesus, knowing that His hour had come to leave this world and go to the Father, loved His own to the end. In this part, Jesus concentrates on the disciples rather than on the crowds and prepares them for the life and the mission after the Cross.

Chapter 13: Loving them to the end and the new commandment—He washes the feet of the disciples, foretells the betrayal of Judas and the denial of Peter, and gives the new commandment to love one another.

Chapter 14: The way to the Father and the promise of the Holy Spirit, the Helper—Jesus reveals that He is the way, the truth, and the life, and promises another Helper who will be with the disciples forever.

Chapters 15–16: The true vine and the mission of

testimony—the disciples must abide in Jesus, bear fruit, and love one another. Even amid the hatred and tribulation of the world, the Holy Spirit, the Helper, testifies of Jesus and guides the disciples into all truth.

Chapter 17: The prayer of Jesus for the disciples—Jesus prays to the Father for His own glory, for the preservation and sanctification of the disciples, for the unity of all who believe, and for the testimony toward the world.

4. The passion and resurrection of Jesus the King—chapter 18, verse 1 to chapter 20, verse 31

When the prayer of chapter 17 ends and Jesus goes out to the garden with His disciples, the major section of the arrest and the passion begins.

Chapter 18: The arrest, the interrogation, and the testimony of His kingship—Jesus is arrested and interrogated by the high priest and by Pilate. He reveals that His kingdom is not of this world and that He is the King who came to testify to the truth.

Chapter 19: The Cross and the burial—Jesus, who had taken charge of the sin of the world with the baptism He received from John the Baptist, receives the judgment of that sin in our place on the Cross, declares, “*It is finished!*” and dies. The words of the Scriptures are fulfilled, and the body of Jesus is buried in a new tomb.

Chapter 20, verses 1–29: The resurrection and the faith of the disciples—the risen Jesus appears to Mary Magdalene and to the disciples and gives them peace and a mission. Thomas confesses Jesus as “*My Lord and my God!*”

Chapter 20, verses 30–31: The purpose of writing the Gospel—John states that although Jesus did many other signs besides these, the signs that were written are meant to make

people believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and to make them have life in His name. This declaration binds together the testimony and the signs from chapter 1 to chapter 20.

5. Epilogue: The care of the risen Lord and the mission of the disciple—chapter 21, verses 1–25

The risen Jesus appears to the disciples again at the shore of the Sea of Tiberias. To the disciples who had caught no fish all night, He gives a great catch of fish and Himself provides them with food. Three times He asks Peter, who had denied the Lord three times, whether he loves Him, restores him, and commands him, “*Feed My sheep.*” He then tells Peter not to compare himself with the other disciple but to follow the way the Lord has entrusted to him. Finally, the Gospel closes with the confirmation that the testimony of the disciple who wrote these things is true, and with the declaration that the things Jesus did are far more than what has been written.

These five parts are not stories separated from one another. When the prologue proclaims Jesus as the Word who is God, as life, and as light, the testimony of John the Baptist and the baptism of Jesus reveal that He is the Lamb of God who took charge of the sin of the world, and the signs and words that follow testify that He is the Christ, the Son of God. The final teachings establish the believing disciples in love, in the Holy Spirit, and in the word, and Jesus completes the salvation of the remission of sin and eternal life by receiving on the Cross the judgment of the sin of the world that He had taken charge of with the baptism He received from John the Baptist, and by rising from the dead. Chapter 21 shows that the disciple who has received that salvation must go forward to the mission of tending the Lord’s sheep and following Him.

What do the Gospel of John and the Synoptic Gospels have in common, and how do they differ?

The Gospel of John and the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, and Luke testify of the same Jesus Christ. All four Gospels record the ministry of John the Baptist, the calling of the disciples, the five loaves and two fish, the entry into Jerusalem, the Last Supper, the arrest and trial, the Cross, the burial, and the resurrection. They are also one in proclaiming Jesus as the Christ, the Son of God, and as the Lord who saves sinners.

But there are differences in emphasis and in the manner of recording.

The Synoptic Gospels record much of the ministry in Galilee and many parables, but the Gospel of John records much of the ministry at the feasts in Jerusalem and Judea and many long conversations.

The Synoptic Gospels repeatedly proclaim the kingdom of God, and the Gospel of John concentrates on explaining eternal life and life itself.

The Synoptic Gospels unfold from the genealogy and birth of Jesus or from the beginning of His public ministry, but the Gospel of John begins with the divinity and the incarnation of the Word who was from the beginning.

In the Synoptic Gospels there appear events of casting out demons and many parables, but the Gospel of John reveals the identity of Jesus through selected signs and the declarations of 'I am'

The Gospel of John contains long records concerning Nicodemus, the Samaritan woman, the sick man at Bethesda, the man blind from birth, and Lazarus.

There are also parts where the order and emphasis of the records seem to differ between the Gospels, such as the timing

of the cleansing of the temple or the relationship between the Last Supper and the Passover. Rather than forcing these into one fixed explanation, we must first see that each Gospel testifies of the same ministry of Jesus according to a different perspective and purpose. The differences between them are not contradictions but the characteristics of the four testimonies that show Jesus Christ more richly.

How are the Gospel of John and 1, 2, and 3 John connected?

The Gospel of John and 1 John, 2 John, and 3 John were all written by the Apostle John, and they testify of one gospel for different purposes and in different situations. The Gospel of John testifies of the signs and words of Jesus, and of His baptism, the Cross, and the resurrection, so that people may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and have life. 1 John assures those who believe that gospel that they have eternal life, and enables them to discern true faith from false faith. 2 John and 3 John apply that truth and love to actual church relationships and to the work of the gospel.

The center of the two groups of writings is not a vague religious love or ethics, but Jesus Christ, the Son of God who came in the flesh, and the salvation He accomplished. The gospel and the themes they have in common are as follows.

1. The Word of life who was from the beginning and appeared in the flesh—the Gospel of John proclaims that the Word, who was with God in the beginning and who is God, became flesh. 1 John calls Him “*the Word of life*” who was “*from the beginning*,” and testifies that He is the One whom the apostles themselves heard, saw, looked upon, and handled with

their hands. Therefore, the incarnation is not an idea or a symbol, but the event of salvation in which God actually came in a human body (John 1:1–4, 14; 1 John 1:1–3; 4:2–3; 2 John 7).

2. The salvation testified to by the water, the blood, and the Spirit—the Gospel of John testifies that Jesus is the Lamb of God who took charge of the sin of the world with the baptism He received from John the Baptist, and the Son of God who shed His blood and died on the Cross and rose again. The disciple who saw the blood and water come out of the side of Jesus on the Cross states that his testimony is true and is meant to make people believe. 1 John confirms this gospel again through the testimony of Jesus Christ who “*came by water and blood*” and of the Spirit. The water, the blood, and the Spirit do not each speak of a different salvation; they testify of the one salvation that Jesus accomplished for sinners (John 1:29–34; 19:30, 34–35; 20:1–29; 1 John 5:6–8).

3. Eternal life received by believing that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God—the purpose of writing the Gospel of John is to make people believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and have life in His name. 1 John declares that the person who believes that Jesus is the Christ is born of God, and that the eternal life God has given is in His Son. It then states that the purpose for which the letter was written to those who believe in the name of the Son of God is to let them know that they have eternal life. If the Gospel of John invites us to life, 1 John gives assurance to the person who has received that life (John 1:12–13; 3:5–16; 20:31; 1 John 5:1, 11–13).

4. A life of fellowship with God in the light and the truth—in the Gospel of John, Jesus is the light of the world and the truth, and the person who follows Him receives the light of life and is set free by the truth. 1 John declares that God is light and in Him is no darkness at all, and teaches that when we walk

in the light there is true fellowship between God and the saints. 2 John and 3 John also emphasize not merely knowing the truth but walking in the truth (John 1:4–9; 8:12, 31–36; 1 John 1:5–7; 2 John 1–4; 3 John 3–4).

5. Brotherly love that flows from the love received first—the Gospel of John testifies that God loved the world and gave His only begotten Son, that Jesus loved His own to the end and laid down His life, and that He gave His disciples the new commandment to love one another. 1 John states that love did not begin first with man, but began with God’s loving us and sending His Son as the propitiation. Therefore, brotherly love is not a price paid in order to obtain salvation; it is the fruit that appears in the person who has believed in the salvation of the only begotten Son and has first been loved (John 3:16; 13:1, 34–35; 15:12–13; 1 John 3:16, 23; 4:7–12, 19–21).

6. Abiding in Jesus, and the word and the Spirit—in the Gospel of John, the disciple abides in Jesus, the true vine, keeps His word, and bears fruit. The Holy Spirit, the Helper, testifies of Jesus and guides the disciples into all truth. 1 John also teaches that the word heard from the beginning must abide in the saints, and that by the Spirit whom God has given they know that God abides in them. Faith is not a momentary assent; it is a life of remaining continually attached to Jesus in the word and in the Spirit (John 14:16–17, 26; 15:1–10, 26; 16:13–15; 1 John 2:5–6, 24–27; 3:23–24; 4:13).

7. Discernment of false christs and false teachings—the Gospel of John states that the light came into the world, but people loved darkness and rejected Him. 1 John and 2 John clearly define those who deny that Jesus is the Son of God and the Christ, or who deny that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh, as antichrists and deceivers. Therefore, love is not an indiscriminate acceptance that sacrifices the truth. The saints

must test whether the spirits are of God, and must not receive into the church or the home a false teacher who does not abide in the teaching of Christ, so as not to share in his evil deeds (John 3:19–21; 8:42–47; 1 John 2:18–27; 4:1–6; 2 John 7–11).

The role of each epistle is also clear.

1 John passes on again the testimony of the apostle who saw and heard the Word of life with his own eyes and ears, and gives the saints the assurance of eternal life. At the same time, it enables them to discern true faith through the right confession about Jesus, abiding in the word, brotherly love, and the testimony of the Spirit.

2 John teaches that truth and love cannot be separated. The saints must love one another, but they must not receive a false teacher who denies the incarnation and the teaching of Christ.

3 John shows the responsibility on the other side. Like Gaius, we must walk in the truth and faithfully receive the brothers and strangers who labor for the gospel. Such work is laboring together for the truth. On the other hand, we must not imitate Diotrephes, who loved to have the preeminence, rejected the apostolic testimony, and did not receive the brothers, but must imitate Demetrius, who had a good testimony even from the truth itself (3 John 3–12).

Therefore, the relationship between the Gospel of John and the Epistles of John is the relationship between ‘the gospel’ and ‘the fruit of that gospel.’ The Gospel of John testifies of who Jesus Christ, the Son of God, is and how He saved sinners, and calls us to faith and life. 1 John confirms that this life is in those who believe, 2 John makes us guard the gospel against false teaching, and 3 John makes us receive true gospel workers and preach the truth together. At the center of all these teachings are Jesus Christ, who came in the flesh and accomplished salvation with His baptism, the Cross, and the resurrection; the eternal life

received by believing in Him; and the life that the person who has received that love lives in the truth and in love.

Were the Gospel of John and the Book of Revelation written by the same author?

Yes. Both the Gospel of John and the Book of Revelation were written by the Apostle John, the son of Zebedee. The Gospel of John is a Gospel written by a witness who himself saw and heard the public ministry, the Cross, and the resurrection of Jesus, and the Book of Revelation is a book of prophecy that records the revelation that John, who was on the island of Patmos for the word of God and the testimony of Jesus, received from the risen Lord (John 19:35; 21:24; Revelation 1:1–2, 9). Both books clearly show the Apostle John’s consciousness as a witness, that he testifies of ‘what he has seen.’

The difference between the two books lies not in the author but in the mission and the form of the writing. The Gospel of John testifies of the signs Jesus performed and the words He spoke when He came in the flesh, and of His baptism, the Cross, and the resurrection, as events in history, so that people may believe in Him and have life (John 20:30–31). The Book of Revelation shows, through visions, symbols, and prophecy, that Jesus, who was slain and came to life again, is reigning even now, upholds the Church, judges evil, and will come again and complete salvation. Therefore, if the Gospel of John reveals the foundation of the salvation that Christ accomplished, the Book of Revelation reveals how that salvation will be completed in the end.

The two books testify of the same Jesus Christ as follows.

Jesus, the Word and the Creator God—the Gospel of John

declares that the Word who was from the beginning is God, that all things were made through Him, and that this Word became flesh (John 1:1–3, 14). The Book of Revelation also calls the name of Jesus, who is coming again, ‘the Word of God,’ and reveals Him as the First and the Last and as the Lord who lives forevermore (Revelation 1:17–18; 19:13).

The Lamb of God who was slain but is alive—the Gospel of John introduces Jesus as the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world, and records with the testimony of an eyewitness the fact that He accomplished salvation on the Cross (John 1:29; 19:30, 34–35). The Book of Revelation shows that very Jesus as the Lamb who was slain but is alive, and who purchased people for God with His own blood. All the beings of heaven worship Him, saying that He is worthy to receive power, honor, glory, and praise (Revelation 5:6, 9–13).

The Savior who gives life and light—in the Gospel of John, Jesus is the light of the world, the resurrection and the life, and the One who gives living water to those who thirst (John 7:37–39; 8:12; 11:25–26). In the Book of Revelation as well, the Lamb leads believers to the fountains of living water, becomes the lamp of the New Jerusalem, and the river of the water of life flows from the throne of God and of the Lamb (Revelation 7:17; 21:23; 22:1–5, 17).

Jesus, the King, the Savior, and the Judge—the Gospel of John reveals that Jesus is the King who testifies to the truth, and the One who has received from the Father the authority to give life and to judge (John 5:21–29; 18:36–37). The Book of Revelation proclaims Him as Lord of lords and King of kings. The Lamb who saved His people with His own blood overcomes evil and judges the world righteously (Revelation 5:9–10; 17:14; 19:11–16; 20:11–15).

The Lord who will be with His people forever—in the

Gospel of John, Jesus promises to prepare a place for His disciples and to come again and have them be with Him where He is (John 14:1–3). The Book of Revelation shows the completion of that promise as the new heaven and the new earth and the New Jerusalem. God dwells with His people, there is no more death, sorrow, or pain, and believers see the face of the Lord and live with Him forever (Revelation 21:1–4; 22:3–5).

Therefore, the Gospel of John and the Book of Revelation together show the beginning and the completion of one gospel. The Jesus of the Gospel of John is the Lord who came in the flesh, saved sinners, overcame death, and rose again, and the Jesus of the Book of Revelation is the Lord who, as that very Lamb who was slain, is alive even now, reigns, and will come again. If the Gospel of John calls us to believe in Jesus and have life in His name (John 20:31), the Book of Revelation calls us again to take the water of life freely (Revelation 22:17) and ends with the hope, “*Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus!*” (Revelation 22:20).

How are the prophecies and types of the Old Testament fulfilled in the Gospel of John?

In the Gospel of John, the Old Testament is not a mere background; it is the word of God that testified of Jesus Christ beforehand. Philip testified of Jesus as “*Him of whom Moses in the law, and also the prophets, wrote*” (John 1:45), and Jesus also revealed that the Old Testament Scriptures testify of Him and that Moses wrote about Him (John 5:39, 46). Therefore, the promises, persons, and events of the Old Testament, and its sacrifices, temple, and feasts, reveal their true meaning and substance in Jesus.

However, the manner of that fulfillment must be seen with distinctions. There are cases where John directly quotes the Old Testament or states that Jesus spoke “*that the Scripture might be fulfilled*” (John 19:28); there are cases where Jesus directly connected an Old Testament event with His own death and life; and there is also thematic fulfillment, in which the whole history of salvation in the Old Testament is completed in Jesus.

1. Words that John directly quoted or presented as fulfilled

The word of the Old Testament	Gospel of John	Content of fulfillment
The voice of one crying in the wilderness (Isaiah 40:3)	John 1:23	John the Baptist prepares the way of the Lord
Zeal for the house of the Lord (Psalm 69:9)	John 2:17	The disciples see Jesus cleansing the temple and remember this word
Those who are taught by God (Isaiah 54:13)	John 6:45	Those who have heard and learned from the Father come to Jesus
The King of Zion comes riding on a donkey (Zechariah 9:9)	John 12:14–15	The entry of Jesus into Jerusalem
Not believing the arm of the LORD (Isaiah 53:1)	John 12:37–38	Not believing in Jesus even after seeing many signs

The word of the Old Testament	Gospel of John	Content of fulfillment
Eyes blinded and hearts hardened (Isaiah 6:10)	John 12:39–41	Isaiah sees the glory of the Lord and speaks of Jesus
A close friend who ate bread lifts up his heel (Psalm 41:9)	John 13:18	Judas Iscariot betrays Jesus
Hated without a cause (Psalm 35:19; 69:4)	John 15:25	The world hates Jesus
Dividing the garments and casting lots for the tunic (Psalm 22:18)	John 19:24	The actions of the soldiers beneath the Cross
Given vinegar to drink when thirsty (Psalm 69:21)	John 19:28–29	The thirst of Jesus and His receiving the sour wine
Not one bone broken (Exodus 12:46; Numbers 9:12; Psalm 34:20)	John 19:36	The bones of Jesus are not broken on the Cross
Looking on Him whom they pierced (Zechariah 12:10)	John 19:34, 37	A soldier pierces the side of Jesus

In particular, John chapter 19 repeatedly explains the details of the events of the Cross as the fulfillment of the Old Testament Scriptures. The death of Jesus was not an accidental tragedy; it was the event of salvation accomplished just as the words that pointed to the suffering righteous one, the Passover lamb, and the One who was pierced had determined.

2. Old Testament events and types that Jesus directly connected to Himself

The ladder Jacob saw—Jacob saw a ladder set up between the earth and heaven, and the angels of God ascending and descending on it (Genesis 28:12). By saying that the angels of God would ascend and descend upon the Son of Man, Jesus revealed that heaven is opened and that the way to come to God is in Himself, the Son of Man (John 1:51; 14:6).

The temple—Jesus said that if the temple were destroyed, He would raise it up in three days, and John explains that this temple referred to the body of Jesus. Through the death of Jesus and His resurrection after three days, the true temple was revealed, in which God dwells among people and sinners come to God (John 2:19–22).

The bronze serpent in the wilderness—the people who were dying from the bites of the fiery serpents lived when they believed the word of God and looked at the bronze serpent on the pole (Numbers 21:4–9). In the same way, the Son of Man also had to be lifted up on the Cross, and whoever believes in Him receives eternal life (John 3:14–15). The event of the bronze serpent shows beforehand the salvation by which the people dying under sin and judgment are made to live by believing in Jesus, who was hung on the Cross.

The manna in the wilderness—the manna in the wilderness was food that God gave, but the fathers who ate it also died. Jesus revealed that it is the Father, not Moses, who gives the true bread, and He proclaimed that He is the bread of life that came down from heaven and gives life to the world. Whoever believes in the flesh and blood of Jesus, that is, in the salvation He accomplished by taking charge of the sin of the world with the baptism He received from John the Baptist, being judged on the Cross, and rising again, receives eternal life (Exodus chapter 16;

John 6:32–35, 48–58).

3. The fulfillment of the sacrifices, the temple, the feasts, and the symbols

The Word of creation and the light—Genesis proclaims that God created the heavens and the earth by His word and made the light shine. The Gospel of John reveals that this Word of creation is Jesus Christ, that all things were made through Him, and that in Him were life and the light of men (Genesis 1:1–5; John 1:1–5).

The tabernacle and the temple—the tabernacle was the dwelling place where God dwelt among Israel (Exodus 25:8). John testifies that the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and reveals that the body of Jesus is the temple. The invisible God revealed Himself in Jesus, who came in the flesh, and through the death and resurrection of Jesus He opened the way for sinners to come to God (John 1:14, 18; 2:19–22).

The sin offering and the Passover lamb—in the sacrifices of the Old Testament, people passed their sin on to a sacrifice without blemish and shed its blood to make atonement (Leviticus chapters 4 and 16). At the Passover, the blood of the lamb made the judgment pass over, and its bones were not broken (Exodus chapter 12). After receiving baptism from John the Baptist, Jesus was testified to be the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world. He took charge of the sin of the world, shed His blood and was judged on the Cross, and then, by rising again, completely accomplished salvation, and like the Passover lamb His bones were not broken (John 1:29, 36; 19:30, 33–36).

The water in the wilderness and the living water of the Feast of Tabernacles—the event in which God brought water out of the rock in the wilderness and gave life to the people, and the living water promised by the prophets, shed light on the word

Jesus gave at the Feast of Tabernacles. Jesus called those who thirst to Himself, and promised, as rivers of living water, the Holy Spirit whom those who believe in Him would receive (Exodus 17:1–7; Isaiah 44:3; Ezekiel 47:1–12; John 7:37–39). Here John does not state that any one event alone was directly fulfilled; he presents the whole of the Old Testament promise of living water as the background.

The shepherd—the Old Testament sings of the LORD as the shepherd of His people and promises one shepherd who will feed the scattered sheep (Psalm 23; Ezekiel chapter 34). Jesus proclaimed that He is the good shepherd, who lays down His life for the sheep and takes it again, and who gives the sheep eternal life (John 10:11–18, 27–28).

The vine—the Old Testament describes Israel as the vine and the vineyard that God planted (Psalm 80:8–19; Isaiah 5:1–7). Jesus revealed that He is the true vine, and said that when the disciples abide in Him they receive life and bear much fruit (John 15:1–8).

Therefore, the fulfillment of the Old Testament in the Gospel of John is not a matter of a few prophecies happening to coincide. The substance of the Creator and the King, the temple and the Lamb, the bread of life and the living water, the shepherd and the vine, of which the Law, the Prophets, and the Psalms testified, appeared in Jesus Christ, the Son of God who came in the flesh. Jesus took charge of the sin of the world with the baptism He received from John the Baptist, was judged on the Cross, and rose from the dead, and thereby completed the remission of sin and the eternal life that the Old Testament had promised and prefigured. Therefore, the way to read the Old Testament rightly is to believe in Jesus, to whom all that testimony points, and to have life.

Who does each chapter of the Gospel of John reveal Jesus to be?

Chapter	How Jesus is revealed	Key content
Chapter 1	The Word who is God, the Creator, the Lamb who takes away the sin of the world	The Word, who is God from the beginning, came in the flesh, and after receiving baptism from John the Baptist He is testified to be the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world.
Chapter 2	The indispensable Lord who fills the lack of human life, the true temple	He fills the lack at the wedding feast and gives a better joy, and reveals that His body is the true temple that will die and rise again.
Chapter 3	The only begotten Son who causes us to be born again of water and the Spirit	He teaches the way of being born from above and receiving eternal life by believing in the salvation He would accomplish with His baptism and the Cross.
Chapter 4	The Savior of the world who accomplishes the will of the Father	He teaches the Samaritan woman about living water and true worship, accomplishes the spiritual harvest that gathers in sinners, and is testified to be the Savior of the world.
Chapter 5	The Son who is equal with the Father and has the authority of life and judgment	He raises up the sick man, and reveals that He is God who raises the dead, gives life, and judges just as the Father does.

Chapter	How Jesus is revealed	Key content
Chapter 6	The bread of life who gives eternal life with His own flesh and blood	He feeds the multitude and walks on the sea, and gives eternal life and the life of abiding in the Lord to those who eat and drink His flesh and blood by faith.
Chapter 7	The Lord who gives the living water of the Holy Spirit to those who believe	He calls those who thirst to Himself, and promises that rivers of living water, that is, the Holy Spirit, will flow from within those who believe.
Chapter 8	The truth who sets us free from sin, and the light of the world	He sets free from the slavery of sin those who abide in His word, and reveals that He is God who existed before Abraham was born.
Chapter 9	God and the Savior who opens both the eyes of the body and the eyes of faith	He heals the man blind from birth, leads him to believe in the Son of Man and worship Him, and exposes spiritual blindness.
Chapter 10	The good shepherd who lays down His life for the sheep and gives abundant life	He knows and keeps His sheep, and has the authority to lay down His life of His own accord and take it again in order to make the sheep live.

Chapter	How Jesus is revealed	Key content
Chapter 11	The resurrection and the life who raises the dead and gives eternal life	He calls Lazarus out of the tomb and raises him, and reveals that He gives the resurrection and eternal life to those who believe in Him.
Chapter 12	The King and Messiah who bears much fruit through His death	He is prepared for burial with fragrant oil and enters Jerusalem as King, and says that He will die like a grain of wheat and give life to many.
Chapter 13	The Lord who loves His own to the end and washes them completely	By washing the feet of the disciples He teaches the salvation in which He takes charge even of their weakness, and He gives the new commandment to love one another.
Chapter 14	The way, the truth, and the life who leads sinners to the Father	He is the only way who actually accomplishes the promised salvation and gives life, and He promises the Holy Spirit, the Helper, and peace.
Chapter 15	The true vine who makes us bear fruit when we abide in Him by faith	He tells the disciples, who have been made clean by the word, to abide in Him, and makes them bear much fruit and a life of love in Him.
Chapter 16	The Lord of peace who sends the Holy Spirit and has overcome the world	He says that the Holy Spirit will reveal sin, righteousness, and judgment and guide into the truth, and He lets us enjoy the peace that is in Him even in tribulation.

Chapter	How Jesus is revealed	Key content
Chapter 17	The Mediator who gives eternal life and makes His people one with God	He accomplishes the work of salvation entrusted by the Father, and prays that the disciples and those who will believe in the future may be sanctified by the truth and be one in God.
Chapter 18	The King of a kingdom that is not of this world	Even while arrested and interrogated, He reveals that His kingdom is not of this world and that He is the King who came to testify to the truth.
Chapter 19	The Lamb of God who finished salvation on the Cross	Having taken charge of the sin of the world, He is judged on the Cross and declares, “ <i>It is finished!</i> ” and completes the work of salvation.
Chapter 20	The risen Lord God who overcame death and makes us believe through the word	Having risen, He sends the disciples, receives the confession of Thomas, and says that blessed are those who believe the written word without having seen.
Chapter 21	The Shepherd who seeks out the failed disciple, restores him, and entrusts the sheep to him	He feeds the disciples who returned empty-handed, and after receiving the confession of love from Peter He gives him the mission to feed His sheep and follow Him.

The chapters of the Gospel of John do not each show a different Jesus; through various events and words they testify of the one Jesus Christ, who is God and who came in the flesh to save sinners and give them eternal life.

What does the ‘Logos’ of the Gospel of John mean?

The Logos of the Gospel of John refers to Jesus Christ. ‘Logos’ (λόγος) means word or speech in Greek, and the Scriptures translate it as ‘the Word.’ This is because the Gospel of John itself reveals that this Word was from the beginning and is God, and that He created all things and became flesh and came among us.

“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God” (John 1:1).

This one verse proclaims three truths about the Word. Since the Word was from the beginning, He is not a creature. Since the Word was with God, He is distinct in person from the Father. At the same time, since the Word is God, He fully possesses the nature and the glory of God.

The Word is the Creator of all things, and in Him are life and light (John 1:3–4). Just as God created the heavens and the earth by His word in Genesis, John reveals that this Word of creation is none other than Jesus Christ. Jesus is not someone who appeared belatedly in a world already made; He is the Creator through whom all things were made.

“And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth” (John 1:14).

That the Word became flesh means that Jesus, who is God,

came into history in an actual human body. He dwelt among people, revealed the invisible God, and saved sinners with His baptism, the Cross, and the resurrection. Therefore, the Logos is a name that binds together and shows as one Jesus' pre-existence, divinity, work of creation, life, incarnation, and salvation.

How does the Logos testify of the divinity and the true humanity of Jesus?

Jesus Christ, the Logos, is one person who is fully God and at the same time came as a true human being. John does not separate the divinity and the humanity of Jesus; he testifies that the Word, who is God, Himself became flesh.

The divinity of Jesus appears as follows.

The Word was from the beginning and is God (John 1:1–2).

All things were created through Him (John 1:3).

In Him is life, and He gives life to people (John 1:4; 5:21, 26).

Jesus has the authority of God to give life, to raise the dead, and to carry out the last judgment (John 5:21–29).

He declares that He existed before Abraham was born and that He and the Father are one (John 8:58; 10:30).

Thomas confesses to the risen Jesus, *“My Lord and my God!”* (John 20:28).

The true humanity of Jesus is also clear. The Word did not merely appear to be a man; He actually became flesh. Jesus was wearied and thirsty from His journey (John 4:6–7), He wept in the face of the death of Lazarus (John 11:33–35), and on the Cross He suffered thirst and pain and actually died (John 19:28–34). Even after His resurrection He showed His wounds to the disciples and ate food with them (John 20:20, 27; 21:9–13).

The divinity and the humanity are not a combination of two different beings. The Word of God, who was from the beginning, Himself put on human flesh. Because Jesus, who is God, came as a true man, He was able to take charge of the sin of man and be judged, and He was able to rise from the dead and give eternal life to those who believe. Jesus Christ is the only Savior who reveals God to man and leads man to God.

In the Gospel of John, how is the kingdom of God connected with eternal life and the kingship of Jesus?

In the Gospel of John, the kingdom of God is the kingdom of Jesus Christ into which the person who has been born again of water and the Spirit enters. The expression ‘the kingdom of God’ appears less often than in the Synoptic Gospels, but its substance appears throughout the whole Gospel in the themes of being born again, eternal life, and the kingship and reign of Jesus.

One must be born again of water and the Spirit to enter the kingdom of God

“Jesus answered, ‘Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God.’” (John 3:5).

To be born of water and the Spirit does not mean merely an outward rite of baptism or a vague change of heart. Here, the water refers to the event of salvation in which Jesus took charge of the sins of mankind by receiving baptism from John the Baptist at the Jordan River. Jesus bore those sins and was hung on the Cross and judged, and He rose from the dead and completed salvation. The Holy Spirit testifies of this truth of

salvation, and gives the remission of sin and new life to the person who believes it.

Therefore, to be born again of water and the Spirit is to receive the remission of sin and to receive new life from God by believing the gospel accomplished through the baptism, the Cross, and the resurrection of Jesus. No one can enter the kingdom of God by lineage, knowledge, moral effort, or religious status. Only the person who has been born anew of the Spirit by believing in the salvation God accomplished sees and enters that kingdom.

Eternal life is the life of the kingdom of God

The Gospel of John expresses the life of the kingdom of God mainly as ‘eternal life.’ Eternal life is not simply existing without end; it is the life of knowing the only true God and Jesus Christ whom He has sent (John 17:3). The person who believes does not merely receive eternal life in the future; he has already passed from death into life now (John 5:24).

The eternal life received in the present is completed in the resurrection at the last day. Jesus promised to raise up at the last day those who believe in Him (John 6:39–40, 44), and He said that He would prepare a place for His disciples and come again (John 14:2–3). Therefore, the kingdom of God begins with the present remission of sin and the life of the Holy Spirit, and is revealed completely in the resurrection and the second coming.

Jesus is the King of a kingdom that is not of this world

Nathanael confessed that Jesus is the Son of God and the King of Israel (John 1:49). Jesus is the King of Zion who entered Jerusalem riding on a donkey (John 12:13–15), and even before Pilate He did not deny that He is a King. But the kingship of Jesus is not a political kingship that drives out Rome by force.

“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 kingdom of Jesus does not come from the military strength and political power of the world. Jesus testifies to the truth, and those who are of the truth hear His voice (John 18:37). Jesus, the good shepherd, knows His sheep and lays down His life, and the sheep hear His voice and follow Him (John 10:11, 27–28).

The Cross looked like a defeat in the eyes of the world, but there Jesus took charge of the sins of His people and completed salvation. The resurrection confirms that Jesus is the true King who overcame sin and death. Therefore, the people of the kingdom of God live not by force and competition but by truth and love; they abide in Jesus and bear fruit, love one another, and testify of the gospel.

The kingdom of God in the Gospel of John is the kingdom in which Jesus the King saves sinners with His baptism, the Cross, and the resurrection, and gives the Holy Spirit and eternal life to those who believe, making them His own people. This kingdom has already begun in those who believe, and it will be completely accomplished through the resurrection at the last day and the second coming of Jesus. ☒

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CHAPTER

1



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John Chapter 1 seen from the perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit

What does the word of John 1:1–4 say? (※ Genesis 1:1–5)

John 1:1–4 proclaims that Jesus Christ is not a mere human being or a creature, but God who was with God from the beginning and created all things. If Genesis 1:1–5 shows the event in which God created the heavens and the earth by His word, the Gospel of John reveals that this Word of creation is none other than Jesus Christ.

1. Genesis and the Gospel of John both begin *“in the beginning”*

Genesis 1:1 begins like this.

“In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.”

John 1:1 also begins with the words *“in the beginning.”*

“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.”

The *“beginning”* of Genesis refers to the time when God began to create the heavens and the earth. But the Gospel of John testifies that the Word already existed before that creation began. It does not say *“the Word came into being”*; it says, *“The Word was.”*

This Word is none other than Jesus Christ. This is because John 1:14 reveals, “*And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us.*” Jesus is not someone who began to exist for the first time in Bethlehem; He is the eternal God who was with God from the beginning.

2. The Word was with God and is God

Two facts appear together in John 1:1.

First, it says, “*The Word was with God.*” This shows the personal relationship between the Son, who is the Word, and God the Father.

Second, it says, “*The Word was God.*” This clearly reveals the divinity of Jesus Christ. Jesus is the Son of God who was with God, and at the same time He is God in essence.

Genesis 1:2 records, “*And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters.*” When we look at the two texts together, we can see that God, the Son who is the Word, and the Spirit of God were together in the work of creation.

3. God created the world by His word

Genesis 1:3 says,

“*Then God said, ‘Let there be light’; and there was light.*”

When God spoke, light actually came into being. God did not make the world by procuring materials; by the power of His word He caused what did not exist to exist.

John 1:3 reveals who this Word of creation is.

“*All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made.*”

“*Him*” refers to Jesus Christ, the Word. Not only the heavens, the earth, the light, and every living thing, but we human beings as well were made through Jesus Christ. Therefore, Jesus is not a created being; He is the Creator God who made all things.

4. The light of Genesis is the light of the actual creation

In Genesis 1:3–5, God said, “*Let there be light,*” and light actually came into being. God divided that light from the darkness, and He called the light Day and the darkness Night.

This is the event in which God actually created the heavens and the earth. When the word of God came upon the world that was without form and void, with darkness on the face of the deep, light came into being, order was established, and a world in which life could live was prepared.

The light of Genesis is the actual light that God created, and at the same time it shows the light of salvation that Jesus Christ shines on the people who are in the darkness of sin and death.

5. In Jesus there is life, and that life is the light of men

John 1:4 says,

“In Him was life, and the life was the light of men.”

The life of every creature came from Jesus Christ. Not only the life of the body but also the eternal life that brings to life the soul dead in sin is in Jesus.

Since the transgression of Adam, all people are born with sin and have become far from God. The heart of man, who lives according to his own thoughts and desires without knowing his sin, is in chaos, emptiness, and darkness. The One who shines

the light of life on such sinners is Jesus Christ.

When the light of Jesus shines, a person realizes his sins and comes to know the salvation God has accomplished. Just as the word of God shone light on the world that was in chaos and darkness, the word of the gospel shines on the heart of the person who is in the darkness of sin and death and enables him to receive new life.

6. The Creator became the Savior of sinners

The amazing truth that John 1:1–4 testifies of is the fact that God, who created us, came in person to save us.

Jesus, the Word, put on a human body and came to this earth. And with the baptism He received from John, He had all the sins of the world transferred to Him. Bearing those sins, Jesus went to the Cross, shed His blood and died, and thereby received the judgment of sin, and He rose from the dead.

The person who believes this gospel of the water and the Spirit in the heart receives the remission of all his sins and receives eternal life. The light of salvation shines on the heart that was dark with sin, and he passes from death into life.

The reason Jesus can save sinners is that He is not a mere human being but the Creator God, the source of life. Because He is the One who created life, He can bring dead souls to life, and because He is the One who created light, He can drive out the darkness of sin and death.

The connection between the two texts

Genesis 1:1–5	John 1:1–4
In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth	From the beginning Jesus, the Word, existed
The Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters	The Word was with God and was God
When God spoke, light came into being	All things were created through Jesus, the Word
The light lit up the darkness	The life in Jesus became the light of men
By the light of creation, order was established in the world	By the light of salvation, sinners receive new life

Conclusion

John 1:1–4 and Genesis 1:1–5 testify of the following facts.

Jesus Christ is God who was with God from the beginning. God created the heavens and the earth through Jesus Christ, the Word. In Jesus is the source of all life, and that life is the light of salvation that shines on the people who are in the darkness of sin and death.

In Genesis, God created light in the dark world by saying, “*Let there be light.*” In the Gospel of John, Jesus Christ, that Creator, shines the light of life and salvation on the hearts of people, which have been darkened by sin.

Therefore, this word does not tell us to believe in Jesus as a mere human being or a religious leader. It tells us to believe in

Jesus as God who created us, and as the Lord of life who saved us from all sins with the baptism He received from John, the blood of the Cross, and the resurrection.

In the word of John 1:5–8, why did John the Baptist say that Jesus is the light of the world?

First, if we look precisely at the expression of the text, it is not that a statement by John the Baptist himself, “Jesus is the light of the world,” is quoted in verses 5–8. It is the Apostle John explaining the mission of John the Baptist as follows.

“This man came for a witness, to bear witness of the Light, that all through him might believe. He was not that Light, but was sent to bear witness of that Light.”

Here, the light that John the Baptist testified of is Jesus Christ. The following verse 9 reveals Jesus as *“the true Light which gives light to every man coming into the world.”*

1. Because in Jesus there is life

The immediately preceding verse 4 says,

“In Him was life, and the life was the light of men.”

Jesus is God who created all things and the source of all life. Not only the life of the body but also the eternal life that brings to life the soul dead in sin is in Jesus.

Just as light brightens the darkness, the life of Jesus shines on the person who is under sin and death and brings his soul to life. Therefore, Jesus is not merely someone who gives good teachings; He is the light who moves people from death into life.

2. Because He gives light to the heart of man that has been darkened by sin

Verse 5 says,

“And the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it.”

Here, the darkness shows the state of man, who does not know God because of sin. When a person has sin in his heart, he does not know where he came from or where he is going, and he cannot discern what true good and salvation are.

The light that Jesus shines exposes, first of all, the sins of man. At the same time, it also reveals how God has removed those sins. It is not a light that only shows a person his sins and drives him to despair; it is the light of salvation that shows the way of the remission of sin and of life.

3. Because He is the Savior who removed all sins

John the Baptist carried out the ministry of baptizing Jesus so that all the sins of the world would be transferred to Jesus. And he testified that Jesus is the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world.

With the baptism He received from John, Jesus had all the sins of the world transferred to Him. Bearing those sins, He went to the Cross, shed His blood and died, and thereby received the judgment of sin, and He rose from the dead.

Therefore, that Jesus is the light of the world does not mean that He simply gave moral lessons to sinners. It means that He actually removed the darkness of sin, judgment, and death, and gave the remission of sin and eternal life to those who believe.

4. Because He shows the way to come to God

In a dark place one cannot find the way. When light shines, one can know where one is and which way one must go.

Jesus lights up the way by which sinners come to God. The person who believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit does not try to be saved by his own deeds or religious efforts, but accepts in the heart the salvation that Jesus has completed.

When a sinner believes the fact that Jesus took charge of the sinner's own sins with the baptism He received from John, paid the price of those sins on the Cross, and rose again, he gets out of the darkness and becomes a child of God.

5. Because Jesus is the light that shines on all people

Jesus is not a light only for a particular people or for special people. He is the Savior who took charge of the sins of all the people of the world.

The mission of John the Baptist was to make all people believe in Jesus through his testimony. John did not try to draw people to himself; he led them to Jesus, the true Light.

John the Baptist was not the light itself. He was a witness who pointed to the light. A lamp shines light, but it cannot be the Savior. John the Baptist did not put himself forward; he testified that Jesus is the Son of God and the Savior who removes the sin of the world.

Conclusion

The reason John the Baptist testified of Jesus as the light is

that in Jesus there is eternal life, and that He saves the people who have fallen into the darkness of sin and death.

With the baptism He received from John, Jesus had all the sins of the world transferred to Him; bearing those sins, He was judged on the Cross; and He rose from the dead. The person who believes this truth of salvation receives the remission of sin and passes from darkness into light, and from death into life.

Therefore, the ministry of John the Baptist was not to present himself as the light, but to testify so that all people might know and believe in Jesus Christ, the true Light.

Through the word of John 1:9–18, what ministry did Jesus Christ, who came to this earth, carry out in order to save sinners from sin?

John 1:9–18 says that Jesus Christ, the Creator God, put on a human body and came to this earth in order to save sinners, and that He gave the remission of sin, new life, and the right to become children of God to those who believe in Him.

The text shows the work of salvation of Jesus in the following flow.

Text	What Jesus did	Meaning of salvation
Verses 9–11	He came into the world as the true Light	He lights up the darkness of sin and death
Verses 12–13	He makes those who believe into children of God	He causes sinners to be born again as those born of God

Text	What Jesus did	Meaning of salvation
Verse 14	The Word became flesh	The Creator God carried out the work of salvation in a human body
Verses 15-16	He bestows grace in fullness	He makes sinners receive the remission of sin and life without any merit of their own
Verse 17	He accomplished grace and truth	He Himself took charge of the price of sin that the Law demanded
Verse 18	He revealed the invisible God	He showed the love of God and His will of salvation

1. Jesus came into the world as the true Light

Verse 9 testifies of Jesus like this.

“That was the true Light which gives light to every man coming into the world.”

Because of sin, man does not know God and lives in the darkness of sin, judgment, and death. Jesus came as the true Light who lights up the way of salvation for such sinners.

Jesus is not a light only for a particular people or for people of a special status. It says He is the Light which *“gives light to every man.”* The grace of salvation that Jesus accomplished is open to all people, whether poor or rich, learned or unlearned, Jew or Gentile.

2. The Creator came into the world He had made

Verse 10 reveals that Jesus is God who created the world. Jesus came into the world He had made, but the world did not recognize its Creator. Even Israel, His own people, did not receive Jesus as the promised Messiah.

But the unbelief of people could not stop the work of salvation of Jesus. Even while receiving rejection and suffering, Jesus accomplished to the end the work of salvation the Father had entrusted to Him.

Here we can see the fact that salvation did not begin from man. It was not that sinners first went looking for God; it was the Creator God who came to this earth looking for sinners.

3. God, who is the Word, put on a human body

Verse 14 proclaims the incarnation of Jesus.

“And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.”

God, the Word, who was from the beginning and created all things, put on an actual human body. Jesus put on the flesh in order to be with sinners, to take charge of the sins of mankind in His own body, and to receive the judgment of sin in their place.

God, who is Spirit, cannot shed blood or die. That is why the Son of God put on a human body and came. With that body, Jesus received baptism from John and had all the sins of the world transferred to Him, and bearing those sins He went to the Cross.

4. He took charge of all the sins of the world with the baptism He received from John

The testimony of John the Baptist that follows the text reveals concretely the purpose for which Jesus came in the flesh.

With the baptism He received from John, Jesus had all the sins of mankind transferred to His own body. Just as in the Old Testament the high priest laid his hands on the head of the sacrifice and passed the sins of the people of Israel on to it, in the New Testament John, the representative of mankind, baptized Jesus and passed all the sins of the world on to Him.

The baptism Jesus received from John is the work of salvation in which the sinless Son of God took charge of the sins of sinners in His own body. Thereby Jesus became the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world.

5. He paid the price of sin in full on the Cross

Bearing the sin of the world that had been transferred to Him through the baptism He received from John, Jesus went to the Cross. By being nailed to the cross and shedding His blood and dying, in the place of sinners He received death, the wages of sin, and the judgment for sin.

The death of Jesus on the Cross does not end as an event in which a sinless person died unjustly. Because Jesus had taken charge of the sin of the world with the baptism He received from John, the blood of the Cross became the price of judgment for the sins of mankind.

By receiving in His own body the judgment that sinners had to receive, Jesus paid the price of sin completely. And He rose from the dead and gave new life and the hope of the resurrection

to those who believe.

6. He made those who believe children of God

Verses 12–13 say,

“But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name: who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.”

To receive Jesus is not merely to call on the name of Jesus or to think about Jesus emotionally. It is for a person to know who Jesus is and how He saved him, and to believe it in the heart.

The name Jesus means Savior. The Christ is the One who fulfills the offices of King, Priest, and Prophet. Jesus is the King of the kingdom of God, the High Priest of heaven who offered His own body as the sacrifice, and the Prophet who taught the truth by which sinners are saved.

The person who believes in the heart the fact that Jesus saved him from all sins with the baptism He received from John, the blood of the Cross, and the resurrection receives the remission of sin and becomes a child of God.

7. He caused people to be born again of God

Becoming a child of God is not achieved by lineage or by human effort. One does not become a child of God because one was born into a Christian family, nor is one born again by living a diligent religious life or by firmly setting one’s own will and resolution.

When a person believes the word of salvation that God

promised and Jesus completed, he is born again of God. To the person who has received the remission of all his sins by believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, God gives the Holy Spirit as a gift. This person is the one who has been born of God, and he is a child of God.

Therefore, salvation is not a work in which a sinner changes himself by his own strength. It is the work in which, when a person accepts by faith the salvation that Jesus completed, God causes the sinner to be born again as a righteous person, and a child of the devil as a child of God.

8. He saved us not by the Law but by grace and truth

Verse 17 says,

“For the law was given through Moses, but grace and truth came through Jesus Christ.”

The Law shows the holy will of God and makes people realize the fact that they are sinners. But the human effort to keep the Law cannot remove the sin that is in the heart.

Jesus Himself took charge of the judgment of sin that the Law demands. He had sin passed on to Him with the baptism He received from John, and He paid the price of that sin on the Cross, thereby fulfilling the righteousness of God. This is the truth that came through Jesus Christ.

Grace means that a sinner receives as a gift the salvation God has accomplished, without any merit of his own. A sinner is not saved because of what he has done; he receives the remission of sin by believing in what Jesus has done.

9. Jesus revealed the love of God

Verse 18 says,

“No one has seen God at any time. The only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, He has declared Him.”

No one has ever seen God the Father with his eyes. But Jesus, the only begotten God, came in a human body and thereby revealed what God is like.

The love of God was revealed through the work in which Jesus took charge of the sins of sinners and gave up His life on the Cross. God is not One who tries to condemn and destroy sinners unconditionally; He is the God of love who sent His own Son and saved sinners.

The incarnation, the baptism, the Cross, and the resurrection of Jesus are the work of salvation that revealed how much God loves sinners.

Conclusion

John 1:9–18 testifies of the work of salvation of Jesus Christ as follows.

Jesus is the Creator God who was from the beginning, but in order to save sinners He put on a human body and came to this earth. With the baptism He received from John, Jesus had all the sins of the world transferred to Him, and bearing those sins He shed His blood and died on the Cross, and thereby received the judgment of sin. And He rose from the dead and gave new life and eternal life to those who believe.

The person who believes this gospel of the water and the Spirit in the heart receives the remission of all his sins and receives the Holy Spirit as a gift, and he is born again of God

and becomes a child of God. This is the grace and truth that came through Jesus Christ, and the perfect love that God accomplished in order to save sinners.

In the word of John 1:29–34, how are the ministry of Jesus and the ministry of John the Baptist connected?

In John 1:29–34, the ministries of John the Baptist and of Jesus are connected as ‘the transfer of sin, the accomplishment of salvation, and the testimony to that fact.’

John the Baptist, as the representative of mankind, baptized Jesus and thereby caused all the sins of the world to be transferred to Jesus. Jesus, as the Lamb of God who took charge of those sins, went to the Cross and received the judgment of sin. On the basis of the baptism he had performed and the sign God had shown him, John the Baptist testified that Jesus is the Son of God and the Savior of mankind.

The ministry of John the Baptist	The ministry of Jesus
Sent by God	Sent by God the Father
As the representative of mankind, baptized Jesus	Had the sin of the world transferred to Him with the baptism He received from John
Testified that Jesus is the Lamb of God	Went to the Cross bearing the sin of the world

The ministry of John the Baptist	The ministry of Jesus
Testified that Jesus is the Son of God	Completed salvation with the Cross and the resurrection
Led people to believe in Jesus	Gives the remission of sin, the Holy Spirit, and eternal life to those who believe

1. John the Baptist baptized Jesus

In verse 31, John the Baptist states the purpose for which he baptized with water.

“I did not know Him; but that He should be revealed to Israel, therefore I came baptizing with water.”

The ministry of water baptism by John the Baptist did not end with leading people to repentance. At the center of that ministry was the work of baptizing Jesus and thereby revealing Him to Israel.

When Jesus received baptism from John, He said,

“But Jesus answered and said to him, ‘Permit it to be so now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness.’ Then he allowed Him.”

For Jesus and John to fulfill all righteousness by doing “thus” means to accomplish the righteous work of saving all people from sin by passing the sins of mankind on to Jesus in the way God had determined.

2. The laying on of hands of the Old Testament was accomplished as the baptism of the New Testament

On the Day of Atonement in the Old Testament, Aaron the high priest laid both his hands on the head of the live goat and passed all the sins of the people of Israel on to it.

“Aaron shall lay both his hands on the head of the live goat, confess over it all the iniquities of the children of Israel, and all their transgressions, concerning all their sins, putting them on the head of the goat, and shall send it away into the wilderness by the hand of a suitable man.”

Just as Aaron, as the representative of the people of Israel, laid his hands on the sacrifice and passed the sins on to it, John the Baptist, as the representative of mankind, baptized Jesus. With the baptism He received from John, Jesus had all the sins of the world transferred to Him once and for all.

The laying on of hands of the Old Testament and the baptism of the New Testament are connected as follows.

- Aaron was the representative of the people of Israel.
- John the Baptist was the representative of mankind.
- The goat was the sacrifice that had the sins of the people transferred to it.
- Jesus is the Lamb of God who had all the sins of the world transferred to Him.
- The goat went into the wilderness bearing the sins of the people.
- Jesus went to the Cross bearing the sin of the world.

3. Jesus became the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world

When John the Baptist saw Jesus, he testified like this.

“The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, ‘Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!’”

This word does not mean, in some vague sense, that Jesus would take charge of the sin of the world. Because he himself had baptized Jesus, John the Baptist knew and testified of the fact that Jesus had taken charge of the sin of the world.

The order is clear.

1. Jesus received baptism from John.
2. All the sins of the world were transferred to Jesus.
3. Jesus bore the sin of the world.
4. Jesus shed His blood on the Cross and received the judgment of sin.
5. He rose from the dead and completed salvation.

The reason Jesus shed His blood on the Cross is that He had taken charge of the sin of the world with the baptism He received from John. The baptism accomplished the transfer of sin, and the blood of the Cross took charge of the judgment of the sin that had been transferred to Him. This is why, in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, the baptism and the Cross are connected as one work of salvation.

4. John the Baptist testified that Jesus is God who has existed from eternity

John the Baptist said concerning Jesus,

“This is He of whom I said, ‘After me comes a Man who is preferred before me, for He was before me.’”

By physical birth, John the Baptist was born about six months earlier than Jesus. Nevertheless, John testified that Jesus existed before him. This is because Jesus is God who was from the beginning.

Therefore, Jesus, who took charge of the sin of the world, is not a mere human being or a martyr. God put on a human body and came, and He Himself took charge of the sins of mankind. The reason the sacrifice of Jesus can save all mankind is that He is the eternal Son of God.

5. The descent of the Holy Spirit is the sign of God that revealed Jesus

John the Baptist says twice, *“I did not know Him.”* But through the word God had given him beforehand and the sign of the Holy Spirit that appeared when he baptized Jesus, he knew clearly that Jesus is the Son of God and the Savior of mankind.

“And John bore witness, saying, ‘I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and He remained upon Him.’”

God had told John the Baptist beforehand that the One upon whom the Holy Spirit descends and remains is He who baptizes with the Holy Spirit. When Jesus received baptism and came up out of the water, the Holy Spirit descended upon Him, and God the Father testified that Jesus is His beloved Son.

This is the sign that shows the fact that Jesus is the Son of God who fulfilled all righteousness with the baptism He received from John, and the Savior whom God the Father sent.

6. Jesus gives the Holy Spirit to those who believe

John the Baptist was one who baptized with water, but Jesus is the One who baptizes with the Holy Spirit.

John the Baptist carried out the ministry of passing sin on to Jesus and testified to that fact of salvation. Jesus took charge of that sin in His own body and was judged on the Cross, and thereby actually removed sin. And He gives the Holy Spirit as a gift to the person who has received the remission of sin by believing this gospel of salvation.

Therefore, receiving the Holy Spirit is not something achieved by fervent human emotion or religious effort. When a person believes in the heart the fact that Jesus removed all his sins with the baptism He received from John, the blood of the Cross, and the resurrection, God gives the Holy Spirit to the heart of the person who has received the remission of sin.

7. John the Baptist testified not of himself but of Jesus

The ministry of John the Baptist was the work of baptizing Jesus and testifying of its result to the world.

He testified of the following facts.

— Jesus is the Lamb of God who took charge of the sin of the world.

— Jesus is the eternal God who existed before him.

— Jesus is the One who baptizes with the Holy Spirit.

— Jesus is the Son of God.

John the Baptist did not hold people as his own disciples. He testified of the fact that he had baptized Jesus and that the sin of the world had thereby passed on to Jesus, and he led people to believe in that Jesus.

Conclusion

In John 1:29–34, the ministries of John the Baptist and of Jesus are connected as one, as follows.

John the Baptist, as the representative of mankind, baptized Jesus and thereby caused all the sins of the world to be transferred to Jesus. With the baptism He received from John, Jesus took charge of all the sins of the world; bearing those sins, He went to the Cross, shed His blood, and was judged; and He rose from the dead.

John the Baptist testified that this Jesus is the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world and the Son of God. Jesus completed salvation with the water and the blood, and gave the Holy Spirit and eternal life to those who have received the remission of sin by believing this gospel.

Therefore, the ministry of John the Baptist is the ministry of passing sin on to Jesus and testifying to that fact, and the ministry of Jesus is the ministry of taking charge of that sin, being judged on the Cross, and rising again, and thereby saving sinners.

What does the word of John 1:35–42 say?

This word shows the process in which the people who heard the testimony of John the Baptist believed in Jesus, followed Him, and became His disciples, and in turn led other people to Jesus.

The flow of the text is as follows.

The testimony of John the Baptist → two disciples follow Jesus → they remain with Jesus → Andrew testifies of Jesus to Simon → Simon meets Jesus

1. John the Baptist testified of Jesus to his disciples

When John the Baptist saw Jesus walking by, he said,
“And looking at Jesus as He walked, he said, ‘Behold the Lamb of God!’”

John the Baptist did not hold on to his own disciples so that they would keep following him. He turned the eyes of people from himself to Jesus.

The words *“the Lamb of God”* contain the meaning that Jesus is the Savior who would be sacrificed in place of sinners. With the baptism He received from John, Jesus had all the sins of the world transferred to Him, and He is the One who would bear those sins, go to the Cross, shed His blood and die, and rise from the dead.

Because he himself had baptized Jesus, John the Baptist knew the fact that Jesus had taken charge of the sin of the world. That is why he could testify to his own disciples that Jesus is the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world.

2. The two disciples heard the word of testimony and followed Jesus

Verse 37 says,

“The two disciples heard him speak, and they followed Jesus.”

The starting point at which the two men came to follow Jesus was hearing the testimony of John the Baptist. They did not follow Jesus without knowing anything. From John the Baptist, their own teacher, they had heard the testimony that Jesus is the Lamb of God and the Savior who took charge of the sin of the world.

Faith begins with hearing the word of God. First, one must hear who Jesus is and what work He did in order to save sinners.

When one believes that word in the heart, one can follow Jesus as one's Savior.

This is not believing in someone's eloquence or character. It is knowing and believing in Jesus through the word of God that the witness has passed on.

3. Jesus asked, "What do you seek?"

Jesus saw the two men following Him and asked,
"What do you seek?"

This question exposes the heart and the purpose of the person who wants to follow Jesus. One may follow Jesus seeking only worldly success and material blessings, or one may seek Jesus in order to be saved from one's sins and receive eternal life.

Jesus is the One who came to save sinners from all sins. Therefore, the person who seeks Jesus must come with a heart that seeks first to have the problem of the sin in his heart solved and to receive the life and truth that Jesus gives.

4. The two disciples remained with Jesus

The two disciples asked where Jesus was staying. Jesus said to them, *"Come and see."*

"He said to them, 'Come and see.' They came and saw where He was staying, and remained with Him that day (now it was about the tenth hour)."

Jesus did not turn away those who followed Him. He invited them and let them remain with Him. The two disciples went to where Jesus was staying and spent that day with Him.

They did not stop at hearing the testimony about Jesus; they

met Jesus in person and were with Him. Through this encounter they came to know and believe more clearly who Jesus is.

True faith does not end with hearing knowledge about Jesus. It must lead to a life of accepting the word in the heart, believing in Jesus as one's own Savior, and abiding in His word.

5. Andrew first went to find his own brother Simon

One of the two men who followed Jesus was Andrew. After meeting Jesus, the very first thing Andrew did was to go and find his own brother Simon.

“He first found his own brother Simon, and said to him, ‘We have found the Messiah’”

When Andrew met Jesus, he did not keep that fact to himself. He went to find his closest brother and testified that he had found the Messiah.

This is the natural flow of the preaching of the gospel.

— John the Baptist testified of Jesus.

— Andrew heard that testimony and met Jesus.

— Andrew testified of Jesus to his own brother Simon.

— Simon, too, was led by Andrew and met Jesus.

The person who has truly met Jesus wants his family and neighbors to meet Jesus too. He preaches the gospel of the water and the Spirit that he has believed, and leads others to receive the remission of sin and eternal life as well.

6. Andrew brought Simon to Jesus

Andrew did not stop at merely introducing Jesus to Simon in words.

“And he brought him to Jesus.”

Preaching the gospel is not a work of holding people to the preacher himself. It is the work of making a sinner meet Jesus and believe in the salvation Jesus has accomplished.

Just as John the Baptist led his own disciples to Jesus, Andrew, too, brought his own brother Simon to Jesus. A true witness is not a person who shows himself, but a person who shows Jesus Christ.

7. Jesus said that He would change Simon into Peter

Jesus looked at Simon and said,

“You are Simon the son of Jonah. You shall be called Cephas”

Cephas (כִּפְּז) is an Aramaic name, and Peter (Πέτρος) is the corresponding Greek name, which has the meaning of rock. At that time Simon was still a person with a hasty and wavering side, but Jesus knew what kind of man of faith he would be built up into in the future.

The word *“You shall be called Cephas”* shows that Jesus would meet Simon and change him into a man of faith within the word and the gospel.

Jesus does not cast a person away by looking only at his present lacking appearance. He takes as His disciple the person who has received the remission of sin by believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, nurtures him with the word and the Holy Spirit, and builds him up as a worker of the kingdom of God.

Conclusion

John 1:35–42 shows the process in which the salvation of

God is passed on to people through testimony.

John the Baptist testified that Jesus is the Lamb of God who took charge of the sin of the world with the baptism He received from John. The two disciples heard that word and followed Jesus, and as they remained with Jesus they believed that He is the promised Messiah.

Andrew, who had met Jesus, went to find his own brother Simon, testified, “*We have found the Messiah,*” and brought him to Jesus. Jesus met Simon and said that He would build him up in the future as Peter, a man of faith.

Therefore, the center of this word is as follows.

- A disciple of Jesus begins by hearing the testimony of the gospel and believing.

- A true witness leads people not to himself but to Jesus.

- The person who has met Jesus testifies of Jesus to those closest to him.

- Jesus meets the person who comes to Him and changes him into a man of faith.

- In this way, through the testimony of one person another person becomes a disciple of Jesus, and the gospel continues to be preached.

What does the word of John 1:43–51 say?

Through the event in which Jesus calls Philip and Nathanael as His disciples, John 1:43–51 shows that Jesus is the Messiah promised in the Old Testament Scriptures, the Son of God, and the King of the kingdom of God. It also shows the flow of the preaching of the gospel, in which the person who has met Jesus tells another person about Jesus so that that person, too, may meet the Lord.

1. Jesus first sought out Philip and called him

“The following day Jesus wanted to go to Galilee, and He found Philip and said to him, ‘Follow Me.’”

It was not that Philip first went to Jesus and asked Him to take him as a disciple. Jesus first found Philip and called him, saying, *“Follow Me.”*

The word *“Follow Me”* does not simply mean to walk along behind Jesus. It is a calling to believe who Jesus is, to follow His word, and to carry out the mission of gospel preaching that Jesus has entrusted to him.

Salvation and the life of a disciple begin with the grace of Jesus, who first comes to seek sinners.

2. Philip, who had met Jesus, went to find Nathanael

After meeting Jesus, Philip went to find Nathanael and said, *“We have found Him of whom Moses in the law, and also the prophets, wrote—Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph.”*

Philip did not introduce Jesus merely as an excellent teacher or a worker of miracles. He testified that the Messiah, of whom the Law of Moses and the prophets had written that He would come, is none other than Jesus.

Earlier, John the Baptist testified of Jesus as the Lamb of God, and Andrew brought his own brother Simon to Jesus. Here, Philip goes to find Nathanael and tells him about Jesus.

God causes the gospel to be passed on to family, friends, and neighbors through the person who has met Jesus first.

3. ***“Come and see”* is an invitation to meet Jesus in person**

When Nathanael heard what Philip said, he responded, *“Can anything good come out of Nazareth?”* Because of his preconception about the region of Nazareth, he could not easily accept Jesus.

But Philip did not try to argue; he said, *“Come and see.”* He was telling him to go to Jesus in person, hear His word, and confirm who He is.

The role of the person who preaches the gospel is also not to hold people to himself, but to lead them to Jesus. When a person meets Jesus and hears the word of the salvation He has accomplished, his wrong thoughts and preconceptions collapse.

4. **Jesus already knew the heart of Nathanael**

When Jesus saw Nathanael coming, He said,
“Behold, an Israelite indeed, in whom is no deceit!”

Nathanael doubted Jesus at first, but he did not pretend to believe. He spoke his thoughts honestly, and accepting Philip’s invitation, he came to Jesus in person.

Even before Philip called Nathanael, Jesus had already been watching him while he was under the fig tree. Nathanael would have been waiting there for the kingdom of God and the promised Messiah.

Jesus saw not only the outward appearance of Nathanael; He knew even his heart and the hope of his faith. This shows that Jesus is God who knows every heart and circumstance of man.

5. Nathanael confessed Jesus as the Son of God and the King

When Nathanael heard the word of Jesus, he confessed,
“Rabbi, You are the Son of God! You are the King of Israel!”

Nathanael, who had doubted Jesus at first, now believed and confessed that Jesus is the Son of God and the King of the kingdom of God.

Philip testified of Jesus as the Messiah of whom Moses and the prophets had written, and Nathanael met that Jesus in person and confessed Him as the Son of God and the King of Israel. The testimony of the word led to an encounter with Jesus, and that encounter appeared as a confession of faith.

Jesus put on a human body and grew up in Nazareth, but His essential being is God. Jesus is the Messiah who would have all the sins of the world transferred to Him with the baptism He received from John, bear those sins and be judged on the Cross, and rise from the dead and thereby save mankind.

6. Jesus is the One who connects God and sinners

Jesus said to Nathanael,

“Most assuredly, I say to you, hereafter you shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man.”

This word calls to mind the ladder that Jacob had seen in his dream. Jacob saw a ladder that reached from the earth to heaven, and the angels of God ascending and descending on it.

Jesus revealed that He Himself is the way of salvation that connects God and man. Sin had separated man from God, but Jesus removed sin with the baptism He received from John, the

blood of the Cross, and the resurrection, and thereby opened the way to come to God.

Therefore, Jesus is not merely someone who teaches the way to heaven; He Himself is the way of salvation by which we come to God.

7. The flow of the preaching of the gospel shown in this word

This text shows the process by which God saves people and makes them disciples.

1. Jesus first sought out Philip and called him.
2. Philip believed that Jesus is the promised Messiah.
3. Philip went to find his friend Nathanael.
4. Nathanael accepted Philip's invitation and came to Jesus.
5. Jesus knew the heart of Nathanael and met him.
6. Nathanael confessed Jesus as the Son of God and the King.
7. Jesus revealed that He Himself is the way of salvation that connects God and man.

Conclusion

John 1:43–51 is the word in which Jesus first seeks out a person and calls him as a disciple, and through the person called first He leads yet another person to Himself.

Philip believed the fact that the Messiah promised in the Old Testament Scriptures is Jesus, and testified of Him to Nathanael. Nathanael at first doubted because of a human preconception, but after coming to Jesus and hearing His word, he confessed Jesus as the Son of God and the King of Israel.

Jesus is God who already knew the heart and circumstances of Nathanael, and He is the way of salvation that connects God and sinners, having removed sin with the baptism He received from John, the Cross, and the resurrection.

Therefore, this word teaches us the fact that the person who has met Jesus must lead others to Jesus, must lay down human judgment and hear the word, and must believe in Jesus as the Son of God and the Savior and follow Him. ☒

Questions and Answers on John Chapter 1

[Question] 1. In John chapter 1 verse 1, what does the declaration that “*the Word*” was from the beginning reveal?

The words “*In the beginning was the Word*” mean that Jesus Christ already existed even before the heavens and the earth were created.

“*In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God*” (John 1:1).

Here, “*The Word*” does not refer simply to words that come out of the mouth or to an abstract idea. It refers to Jesus Christ, who was with God the Father and who Himself created all things by His word. The words that follow also make this clear.

“*He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made*” (John 1:2–3).

“*The beginning*” shows the fact that Jesus is not a created being. It is not that the world existed first and Jesus came to exist afterward. Even before the heavens, the earth, and all created things came into being, He was with God the Father. The beginning of all things is not the beginning of Jesus Christ; rather, all things began through Christ, who already existed.

Genesis says, “*In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth,*” and testifies that when God said, “*Let there be light,*” there was light. The Gospel of John reveals who it was that spoke that very word of creation. Jesus Christ, who was with God the

Father, created all things by His word; therefore, He is the Creator God.

The words “*the Word was with God*” show the relationship between God the Father and the Son, Jesus Christ. Jesus was with God the Father. At the same time, since it says, “*The Word was God*,” Jesus is not a created being lower than God or a mere prophet, but God.

The Book of Hebrews also testifies that God has spoken to us by His Son, “*Through whom also He made the worlds.*” The First Epistle of John calls Him “*the Word of life*” that was from the beginning, and testifies that He was with the Father and was manifested to people. Because the Word who existed from eternity put on human flesh and came to this earth, the disciples could see Him with their eyes, hear Him with their ears, and touch Him with their hands. He is none other than Jesus Christ.

Therefore, the words “*In the beginning was the Word*” can be summed up as follows.

Jesus Christ was with God the Father even before the world was created, and He is God who created all things by His word. That eternal God later put on the flesh, came among people, and became our Savior. Therefore, faith in Jesus is not merely believing in a great human being or the founder of a religion, but believing in the Creator God who made us and came to save us.

[Question] 2. Explain the testimony of John chapter 1 verse 3 that all things were created through Christ.

John 1:3 says, “*All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made.*” Here, “*Him*” refers to “*the Word*” in the preceding verse, and that Word is

none other than Jesus Christ.

“All things were made through Him” means that Jesus Christ is not a created being, but the Creator God who made all things. Christ is not someone who came into existence after the world came into being. He was with God the Father even before all the worlds came into being, and He created all things together with the Father and the Holy Spirit. In this context, the Gospel of John specifically highlights the fact that all things were created through Jesus Christ, the Son of God.

Genesis says, *“In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth,”* and then it is written, *“Then God said, ‘Let there be light’; and there was light.”* When God spoke, what had not existed came into being. The Gospel of John reveals that the Word who created the heavens and the earth in Genesis is none other than Jesus Christ. Therefore, Jesus Christ is not merely someone who was present at the scene of creation, but God who brought all things into existence by His word.

Here, *“All things”* includes not only the heavens and the earth and everything in them, but even the world that we cannot see. The Book of Hebrews also says that God has appointed His Son *“heir of all things, through whom also He made the worlds.”* Therefore, there is nothing that came into being by itself apart from Christ. The words *“without Him nothing was made that was made”* confirm once again that the beginning of everything created lies in Christ.

We human beings, too, are created beings made through Christ. Man was made specially in the image of God, but he is not the self-existent God. We are beings whom Christ made, and He is our Creator and Master. Christ, on the other hand, is not a created being made by anyone, but God who has existed from the beginning. Therefore, we must not regard Christ merely as a man or a prophet.

What is even more amazing is the fact that the God who created us put on the flesh and came to this earth in order to save us. God who is the Word, who made all things, became a man and came to His own creatures who had fallen into sin. In other words, the One who is the Creator became our Savior. Therefore, the salvation of Jesus Christ is not help offered by a weak human being, but salvation accomplished by God, who made all things and upholds them by the word of His power.

In the end, the words *“All things were made through Him”* clearly teach us who Jesus Christ is. He is God who existed before all things, the Creator who brought everything into existence, the Master who made us, and the Savior who came to us when we had fallen into sin. Therefore, we must not think little of Christ with our own thoughts as created beings, but believe in Him as the Creator God and Savior, just as the Scriptures testify.

[Question] 3. Explain the words of John chapter 1 verse 4 that there is life in Christ.

John 1:4 says, *“In Him was life, and the life was the light of men.”* Here, *“Him”* refers to the Word of the preceding verse, who made all things, that is, Jesus Christ.

That there was life in Christ does not mean that He is merely one creature that has life. It means that Christ is the Lord of life and God who gives all life. Since all things were made through Christ, the life of man also came from Him. Just as God made man and gave him life, Christ is the One who brings all things into existence and gives life to every living thing.

John 5:26 also says, *“For as the Father has life in Himself, so He has granted the Son to have life in Himself.”* Just as God

the Father has life, the Son also has life. Therefore, Jesus Christ is not a created being who lives by borrowing life from another being, but God who gives life.

However, the life spoken of in John 1:4 does not mean only that a person is physically alive. Human beings, who were created by receiving life from God, were cut off from God through the transgression of Adam and fell into sin, death, and darkness. Even though the body is alive, the soul whose relationship with God has been severed is in a state of having lost life.

That is why it says that the life that is in Christ became “*the light of men.*” It means that Christ, the Lord of life, came as the light in order to save people who had fallen into sin and darkness. By having the sins of people transferred to His own body through the baptism He received from John, being judged on the Cross, and rising from the dead, Christ gave back to people the life they had lost through sin. Therefore, this life is the light that saves sinners from sin, and the light of salvation that brings people who were cut off from God back to God.

The life that is in Christ is not some object or power separated from His person. Jesus Himself is life. The Lord said, “*I am the way, the truth, and the life,*” and before the tomb of Lazarus He also said, “*I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live.*” To receive life is to meet Christ, who is life, and to accept the gospel of the water and the Spirit that He accomplished.

The First Epistle of John also testifies of Jesus Christ as “*the Word of life*” and “*eternal life.*” That life is Jesus Christ, who was with the Father and was manifested in human flesh. Therefore, the words “*In Him was life*” include even the meaning that the Son of God, who was with the Father from the beginning, was manifested in the flesh and gave us eternal life.

The new life that Christ gives is not merely receiving comfort of heart or help in this world. It is the life in which one receives the remission of sin, becomes a child of God, has fellowship with God again, rises again even after the body dies, and lives with God forever. When Jesus said, “*Whoever lives and believes in Me shall never die,*” He was also speaking of this eternal life.

Therefore, John 1:4 reveals that Jesus Christ is the source of life, the Savior who gives life to those who have lost life, and the God of resurrection who raises even the dead. Because there is life in Christ, the person who believes in Him and accepts the salvation He accomplished escapes from the darkness of sin and death and receives new life and eternal life.

[Question] 4. As what kind of person does John chapter 1 verse 6 introduce John the Baptist?

John 1:6 says, “*There was a man sent from God, whose name was John.*” John the Baptist was not a man who stepped forward on his own and started a religious movement, but a servant who received God’s special will and command and was sent by Him.

John the Baptist was born as the son of Zacharias the priest, and he was a man chosen to be filled with the Holy Spirit from his mother’s womb. Born six months before Jesus, he lived in the wilderness, and when the time came, he cried out for repentance to the people of Israel and baptized them with water. He was not a man who came to display his own name or authority, but the forerunner of the gospel who was sent to prepare the way of the Christ who was to come.

He had two important missions. The first was to rebuke the people who had fallen into sin, lead them to repent, and turn them back to God. He rebuked without fear even the sins of the

king and the religious leaders, and prepared the hearts of the people so that they could welcome the Christ.

The second was to baptize Jesus, pass all the sins of mankind on to Him, and testify that Jesus is the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world. John the Baptist, as the greatest among those born of women, baptized Jesus on behalf of mankind, and the next day he testified, “*Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!*”

However, John the Baptist himself was not the Savior or the true Light. He was a man who came to testify of Jesus Christ, the Light, so that all people might believe in Jesus through his testimony. He did not keep people bound to himself; he confessed, “*He must increase, but I must decrease,*” and turned people’s eyes to Christ.

Therefore, John the Baptist was a man whom God Himself sent, the last prophet of the Old Testament and the representative of mankind who baptized Jesus, and the forerunner of the gospel who testified that Jesus is the Son of God and the Savior who took charge of the sin of the world.

[Question] 5. In John chapter 1 verses 12–13, who receives the right to become children of God?

The Scriptures say this clearly.

“*But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name: who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God*” (John 1:12–13).

The right to become children of God is given to those who receive Jesus Christ, that is, to those who believe in His name. Here, to receive Him does not mean uttering the name of Jesus

with one's mouth or vaguely saying that one accepts Jesus. It is to accept in one's heart who Jesus Christ is and what He did for us, just as the Scriptures testify.

Jesus is God who made all things by His word, and He is our Savior. 'Jesus' means the One who saves His people from their sins, and 'Christ' means the One who fulfilled the offices of King, High Priest, and Prophet. He came in human flesh and took charge of our sins by being baptized by John the Baptist, bore those sins and was judged and died on the Cross, and rose from the dead and completed our salvation. To believe in one's heart in this Jesus Christ and the salvation He accomplished is to receive Him.

Becoming a child of God is not accomplished by blood. Just because one's parents believe or one's family has attended church for generations, the children do not automatically become children of God. Nor does it come about by the will of the flesh—by fleshly desire or emotional excitement and experience, nor by the will and recognition of any person or denomination. Each person must believe, according to the word, that Jesus Christ is his own God and Savior.

However, this faith itself does not mean that a person produces salvation by his own strength. Salvation is the work of God, who sent His Son, washed away our sins through that Son, and completed it with the Cross and the resurrection. A person accepts in his heart this word of salvation that God has accomplished. That is why the Scriptures say that the one who believes that Jesus is the Christ is "*born of God*."

The right to become children of God is the status and privilege by which God acknowledges and accepts a person as His own child and as one of His own people. Such a person receives the remission of sin, has the Holy Spirit dwell in his heart, and receives new life. He also becomes able to call God

Father and to come before Him. Therefore, the right to become children of God is not obtained by human lineage or merit, but is a gift of grace given to those who have received by faith the salvation God accomplished.

[Question] 6. In John chapter 1 verse 14, with what words does the Apostle John describe the incarnation of Jesus?

The Apostle John describes the incarnation of Jesus with the words “*the Word became flesh and dwelt among us.*” It means that the Word, who was with God the Father from the beginning, who is Himself God, and who created all things, put on human flesh and came into this world.

When Jesus came to this earth, He did not cease to be God and change into a mere human being. The eternal God put on a human body in order to save people from sin. So Jesus dwelt among people as true God and at the same time true man. The disciples could see Him with their eyes, hear His words, touch Him with their hands, and live together with Him.

The words “*dwelt among us*” mean that Jesus did not merely appear like a man for a while, but actually entered into human life. He experienced human hunger, weariness, and sorrow, but He had no sin. And He saved people by offering His sinless flesh as the sacrifice of atonement.

The purpose for which the Word became flesh was to take charge of the sins of mankind and to receive the judgment of those sins in place of mankind. By being baptized by John the Baptist, Jesus took charge of all the sins of the world, bore those sins and died shedding His blood on the Cross, and rose from the dead. Had He not put on the flesh, He could not have taken

charge of the sins of people in His body or died in place of people; therefore, the incarnation was the love of God for accomplishing salvation.

The Apostle John goes on to testify, “*And we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.*” Through the words of Jesus and the works He did, and through His baptism, the Cross, and the resurrection, the disciples saw the glory of the only begotten Son of God. In Jesus there was fullness of the grace that saves sinners freely, and of the truth that actually completed the salvation He had promised.

Therefore, the incarnation is the event in which the eternal God who is the Word put on a human body, came among us, revealed God, and saved sinners with His baptism, the Cross, and the resurrection.

[Question] 7. In John chapter 1 verse 17, how are the Law given through Moses and the grace and truth that came through Christ distinguished?

The words “*the law was given through Moses, but grace and truth came through Jesus Christ*” mean that the roles of the Law and of salvation are different from each other.

The Law is the command that God gave through Moses. It teaches what to do and what not to do, and makes people realize how many sins they commit before the righteous standard of God. That is why it is said, “*By the law is the knowledge of sin.*” Because man is weak in the flesh and cannot keep the Law perfectly, he cannot be saved from sin by the works of the Law. The Law exposes the sins of people and the judgment that follows those sins, and makes them know the fact that a Savior

is absolutely necessary.

But grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. Here, grace refers to the gift of salvation that God gives freely, not something a person obtains by his own works or receives by paying a price. Truth means that the salvation Jesus Christ accomplished is not a false or incomplete promise, but a true salvation that has actually been completed.

Jesus Christ put on human flesh, came to this earth, took charge of the sins of mankind by being baptized by John the Baptist, bore those sins and received the judgment on the Cross, and rose from the dead. As a result, those who believe in Christ receive the remission of sin, become righteous, become children of God, and receive eternal life. This is the grace and truth that came through Jesus Christ.

Therefore, these words do not mean that the Law is false or unnecessary. The Law exposes the sins of people accurately, but it cannot do the work of saving sinners. Moses delivered the Law, but Jesus Christ Himself accomplished salvation. A person must not try to add his own works of the Law as a condition of salvation, but must believe in his heart in the salvation that Jesus Christ accomplished.

[Question] 8. In John chapter 1 verse 19, who were “the Jews” who sent priests and Levites to question John the Baptist about his identity?

“*The Jews*” spoken of here does not refer to the whole Jewish nation or the common people, but to the leading class that held religious authority in Jerusalem. Concerning the priests and Levites they had sent, the text reveals, “*Those who were sent were from the Pharisees*” (John 1:24). Therefore, those who

came to John the Baptist were official religious representatives acting under the instructions of the Pharisees.

At that time, no true servant of God had appeared for a long time, and the priests and religious leaders were clinging to their religious offices and authority while having drifted far from the word of God. But when John the Baptist appeared in the wilderness, rebuked without hesitation the sins of the people, the king, and the religious leaders, cried out for repentance, and baptized people, many people went out to him. Those who were challenged most by this were none other than the religious leadership, which had the incumbent priests and Levites under its command.

Therefore, the purpose for which they sent men was not to listen humbly to the testimony of John the Baptist and repent. They interrogated him about his identity and authority, asking in turn whether he was the Christ, Elijah, or the Prophet. The words *“that we may give an answer to those who sent us”* (John 1:22) show the attitude that they had to report to the authorities who had sent them. Also, their asking, *“Why then do you baptize if you are not the Christ, nor Elijah, nor the Prophet?”* (John 1:25) was not so much an attempt to confirm by faith whether God had sent John, as a demand to know by what authority he was baptizing the people within their own religious domain.

They knew that there were promises in the Scriptures concerning the Christ, Elijah, and the Prophet. But even with John the Baptist, who had been sent as the fulfillment of that word, right before their eyes, they did not recognize him. They had religious status and knowledge of the Scriptures, but they did not turn back before the rebuke of John the Baptist, nor did they know Jesus Christ, of whom he testified. That is why John said to them, *“There stands One among you whom you do not know”* (John 1:26).

In the end, “*The Jews*” of verse 19 are the religious leaders of Jerusalem who, while claiming to serve God, had drifted far from the word—in particular, the authorities of the Pharisaic line. They were sensitive when it came to protecting their own offices and religious authority, but they were blind when it came to receiving the rebuke of the servant God had sent, repenting, and receiving the Christ of whom he testified.

[Question] 9. In John chapter 1 verse 29, what does the testimony “*The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world*” mean?

John the Baptist pointed to Jesus and testified, “*Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!*” Here, “*The Lamb of God*” is not a phrase that simply expresses the gentle character of Jesus. It means the atoning sacrifice that receives the sins of the sinner passed on to it and dies in his place.

In the Old Testament age, for a person to receive the remission of his sins, he had to bring a lamb or a goat without blemish before God and lay his hands on its head. When the sins of the sinner passed on to the sacrifice through the laying on of hands, that sacrifice died shedding its blood in place of the sinner. On the Day of Atonement, too, Aaron the high priest laid both his hands on the head of the live goat, confessed all the sins of the people of Israel, and passed those sins on to the goat. Then the goat bore all the iniquities of the people and went into the wilderness. Therefore, the word lamb contains both the transfer of sin and the vicarious death together.

Jesus came to this earth as this very sacrifice of the Old Testament. But Jesus is not a sinner who committed sin; He is the Son of God, who is originally without sin. The One who had

no sin offered His own body as the sacrifice of atonement in order to give life to sinners.

Jesus' being baptized by John the Baptist was also for accomplishing this work of salvation. Jesus was baptized after saying, "*Thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness.*" Just as the sacrifice of the Old Testament received the sins passed on to it through the laying on of hands, Jesus took charge of all the sins of the world by being baptized by John the Baptist, the representative of mankind. That is why John the Baptist could point to Jesus the next day and testify that He is the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world.

"*The sin of the world*" does not mean only some sins or original sin. It refers to all the sins that all people commit in heart and in deed from the time the world began until it ends. The sins a person commits from birth until death, the sins committed knowingly and unknowingly, and all the sins of the past, the present, and the future are included in the sin of the world. Jesus took charge of all those sins with His baptism and bore them all the way to the Cross.

The words 'takes away' contain the meaning that after taking charge of sin, Jesus also received the judgment that follows that sin. The reason Jesus, who had no sin, was hung on the cross and died shedding His blood is that our sins passed on to Him. On the cross Jesus said, "*It is finished!*" and died, and He rose again on the third day and became our eternal Savior.

Therefore, these words are the testimony that Jesus took charge of all the sins of mankind with His baptism and, by receiving the punishment of those sins in place of mankind on the Cross, saved sinners completely. The person who believes this fact in his heart receives the remission of sin and becomes a child of God, not by his own works, but by the salvation that the Lamb of God accomplished.

[Question] 10. In John chapter 1 verse 32, what does the event in which the Holy Spirit came down from heaven like a dove and remained upon Christ signify?

This is the sign by which God enabled John the Baptist to recognize with certainty who Jesus is. John the Baptist did not recognize Jesus as the Christ by his own judgment. God had said beforehand, *“Upon whom you see the Spirit descending, and remaining on Him, this is He who baptizes with the Holy Spirit,”* and when John baptized Jesus, the Spirit came down and remained upon Jesus just as that word had said. That is why John said, *“I have seen and testified that this is the Son of God.”*

The words *“like a dove”* mean that the Holy Spirit descended in a form that John the Baptist could recognize. The Gospel of Luke also records, *“The Holy Spirit descended in bodily form like a dove upon Him.”* Therefore, this was not a vague feeling or guess on John’s part, but a sign that God actually showed him, just as He had promised. The word *“remained”* also emphasizes that the sign God had made known to John was fulfilled exactly in Jesus.

Moreover, this event was God Himself acknowledging and testifying to the fact that Jesus fulfilled all the righteousness of God by being baptized by John the Baptist. Jesus was baptized, saying, *“Thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness.”* When Jesus came up from the water, the Holy Spirit came upon Him, and God the Father said, *“This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.”* The Holy Spirit and God the Father together attested to the fact that Jesus took charge of all the sins of mankind through His baptism and became the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world.

Therefore, that the Holy Spirit remained upon Jesus does not

mean that Jesus became the Son of God only at that moment. It was an event that revealed that Jesus, who was already the Son of God, had appeared as the Savior of mankind, and that He is the Lamb of God who would take charge of sin with His baptism and go to the Cross. At the same time, it showed that Jesus is the One who accomplishes the remission of sin and gives the Holy Spirit to those who believe, that is, *“He who baptizes with the Holy Spirit.”*

Therefore, in this scene the testimony of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit appears together. The Son, Jesus, fulfilled all righteousness by being baptized; the Holy Spirit came down upon Him and gave the sign that He is the Son of God and the Savior; and God the Father testified with a voice from heaven that He was well pleased with His Son. Having seen this clear testimony, John the Baptist testified to people that Jesus is the Son of God and the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world. ☒

Sermon 1 by Paul C. Jong

God who revealed Himself by His word

< John 1:1-13 >

“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made. In Him was life, and the life was the light of men. And the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it. There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. This man came for a witness, to bear witness of the Light, that all through him might believe. He was not that Light, but was sent to bear witness of that Light. That was the true Light which gives light to every man coming into the world. He was in the world, and the world was made through Him, and the world did not know Him. He came to His own, and His own did not receive Him. But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name: who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.”

Dear fellow believers, how much you have labored! I give thanks that God has helped us until now and brought us this far, even in the midst of real hardship with so much to do. Today I would like to meditate on the word concerning God who revealed Himself by His word.

Our faith starts from the Word in the beginning

John 1:1 says, *“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.”* The Apostle John, moved by the Holy Spirit, recorded this word by faith. The word in Genesis 1:1–5 is that very Word. *“In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. The earth was without form, and void; and darkness was on the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters. Then God said, ‘Let there be light’; and there was light. And God saw the light, that it was good; and God divided the light from the darkness. God called the light Day, and the darkness He called Night. So the evening and the morning were the first day.”*

In the beginning, when there was nothing, when darkness was on the face of the deep, the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters. When God said, ‘Let there be light,’ there was light, and God saw the light, that it was good. God divided the light from the darkness, and He called the light Day and the darkness Night. God created the heavens and the earth by His word.

Here the Triune God is fully revealed. When the universe and all things were first made, all three were together. The Spirit was hovering over the face of the waters, God the Father also appears, and since it says the Word was God, Jesus, being together with the Father and the Holy Spirit, created the universe and all things by speaking the word Himself. It means that He made the heavens and the earth by His word.

Our faith must start from here. Only then does that faith stand rightly on the rock. The fact that in the beginning was the Word, that the Word was with God, and that the Word made the universe and all things is the foundation of faith. Without this foundation, even if we hear the word that Jesus saved us, we

collapse later on. God created the universe and all things. That God who is the Word was Jesus, and Jesus was together with God the Father and the Holy Spirit. God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit made the universe and all things together, and in particular, Jesus created them by speaking the word Himself. Only when we have this faith are we not confused and do we not collapse.

Usually, the problem that people who believe in Jesus run into later, after believing in the blood of the Cross and living a life of faith for a good while, is that they cannot believe in God. So there are people who say that they cannot believe any of it—whether Jesus removed their sins or not, or whether He is God. There are not a few such people. Such a person must lay the foundation of faith on the fact that in the beginning was the Word, that the Word was with God the Father, and that the heavens and the earth were created by that Word. The One who created is God, and that God who is the Word is none other than Jesus Christ. Only when one lays the foundation here does that faith not collapse in any situation.

A sister who said she could not believe in God

Long ago there was a sister. She had been in another department, but I called her to the design department and had her learn the work from the sisters who were ahead of her. But her face looked dark and troubled. Thinking that it must be hard because she was doing work she had never done before, I pretended not to notice and waited for her. Anyone is afraid when told to do a new job.

After a few days, that sister said she had something to tell me. She came out frowning, with a serious look, so I said, “Don’t

be like that. Where shall we talk?” She said let’s go somewhere quiet, so I followed her. The first thing she said was that she could not believe in God. She said that however hard she tried to believe, she could not. So I asked her: What word have you heard all this time while you were in the church? She answered that she had merely been in the church. As far as I know, you, as one who was ahead, had fellowship with all the younger sisters and led them, so what is this you are saying to me now? Don’t you know that Jesus created the universe and all things? Still, she said she could not believe and that there was no God in her heart.

At that time I was as shocked as if I had been struck on the back of the head with an iron bar. For a long while I was dumbfounded. I thought, so there are people like this in the world—and what is more, there is someone in our fellowship who does not believe in God. So I told her the word: “God created the heavens and the earth. Among those who created, there is God the Father and there is the Holy Spirit, but Jesus Christ is also God. He made the universe and all things by His own word. The sky we are looking at, the stars, the world of the Milky Way—all of it is what He made, and we are the descendants of Adam, whom God made, so can you not tell when you look at all these things?” Even after I delivered this word to her, she said there was no God in her heart and she could not believe. That day my mind went blank. Still, I admonished her well. “You heard only the gospel at first, and after that you should have heard the foundational word through the sermons, but you did not. I told it all, but you did not listen. I will teach you even now,” I said, and admonished her one thing at a time.

Adam and Eve, and the promise of salvation contained in the tunics of skin

Jesus Christ made the universe and all things. The fact that in the beginning God created the heavens and the earth can be known only by faith. We were not there at that time, nor did we see Him making it. What would it have been like if man had been present at the scene of creation? The Lord would not have had a moment to create, with man meddling and asking why He was making things this way. Since everything was mysterious and new, man would have interfered endlessly. Man is a being who loves to interfere. That is why God made man last, on the sixth day.

After making all things, on the sixth day God formed the shape of a man out of the dust and breathed the breath of life into his nostrils. Then his eyes blinked and the man moved. He is Adam. When Adam was bored being alone, God caused him to fall into a deep sleep, took one of his ribs, formed flesh on it, and breathed the breath of life into it. That is Eve. When God brought Eve to Adam, Adam rejoiced, saying, This is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she is the best! He was so pleased that from then on he listened to everything Eve said.

But the serpent came to Eve and asked, “Did God say not to eat of the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil in the midst of the garden? Why would He have said not to eat it? He said not to eat it because He was afraid that if you ate it you would become like God.” When Eve heard this, it sounded plausible. Eve had never once been restrained or scolded with the word ‘no.’ But God had not given that commandment in order to suppress man. God had another purpose. Even if man fell for the devil’s enticement and sinned, He had a plan to create him anew again, make him one of God’s people, and let him live

well with God forever.

Eve, having heard the words of the serpent, had her heart captivated. Eve had answered the serpent, *“But of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God has said, ‘You shall not eat it, nor shall you touch it, lest you die’”* (Genesis 3:3). God had clearly said, *“In the day that you eat of it you shall surely die”* (Genesis 2:17), but Eve added her own thought, saying ‘lest you die.’ It was a word without faith. Already here things had gone wrong. Yes, I should eat it. I should not eat it alone, but give it to the one I love too. Eve, having been told that she would become like God if she ate it, said she would eat it and ate it, and she also gave to her husband Adam, who was with her, and he ate (Genesis 3:6).

After that, God called Adam. “Adam, where are you?” Adam answered, “I was afraid, so I hid behind a tree.” When He asked, “Who made you eat the fruit that I told you not to eat?” Adam said, “The woman Eve, whom You gave me, picked the fruit of that tree and gave it to me to eat, and when I ate it, shame came upon me, so I sewed leaves together to make clothes and hid because I was afraid.” Before, God and man had been intimate and had not been ashamed, but after they ate the fruit God had forbidden, shame and fear came in.

God said to the serpent, “Because you deceived Adam and Eve, you shall be cursed; you shall go on your belly and eat dust.” And it actually came to pass just so. To Eve He said, “Because you believed the words of the devil and did not believe My word, you shall suffer the pain of childbearing, and all your life you shall live desiring your husband.” To Adam He said, “Because you did not believe My word, from now on you shall till the ground and toil in order to eat and live,” and He sent them out of the Garden of Eden. The ground brought forth thorns and thistles. Thorns, which had not been on the earth until then,

sprang up, and as Adam went out leading Eve, their legs were pricked and bled. From then on, among mankind there came to be those who farm and those who keep sheep.

But God did not send them out just as they were. He killed an animal, stripped off its skin, and made tunics for Adam and Eve and clothed them. He was saying: because of your sin, this sacrifice is judged in your place and pays the price of your sin; through the sacrifice I receive the price of your sin and remit your sin. He was telling them in advance that He would save mankind through His Son in the days to come. According to that promise, Jesus came to this earth, was baptized by John and received the sins of mankind passed on to Him, and like that sacrifice He was judged in our place on the Cross, died, and rose again. The tunics of skin were the shadow that showed this salvation in advance.

Creation is known not by thinking but by faith

It is not only that sister who is like this when confronted with the word that in the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. If one says, I will believe after racking my brains, I will believe after understanding it with my thinking, one cannot believe. When it says that in the beginning God created the heavens and the earth, there is nothing we can do but believe, saying, “Ah, God made it.” If we believe the fact that God made the universe and all things, this word too becomes believable, and all the words concerning the universe and every creature God made become believable as well. Before God there is nothing but faith. Even if we harbor doubts and ask why He made the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, why He let them eat of it, there is no answer. It is because God did it because

He wanted to. But when we look at the end, we can tell whether God harbors good thoughts or bad thoughts toward us. God let us fall into error for a little while and suffer for a little while in order to make us born again, make us God's people, let us live well with God forever, clothe us with riches and glory, and bless us.

All these things can be known only by faith. By faith we reach the righteousness of God, by faith we receive the remission of sin, by faith we believe in God, by faith we know that God made the universe and all things, and by faith we enter the kingdom of heaven. The sins we commit daily and our shortcomings, too, are remitted by faith through the Lord.

But in this world there are people who cannot believe in God. They are the philosophers. Philosophy is what one thinks for oneself. If one thinks and understands, one believes; if one does not understand, one does not believe. If they studied the creatures God made, they might believe, saying, it really is so; but God is such a great One that He and the great works He has done can be known only by faith. Yet because they do not believe but only reason with their thoughts, they cannot believe.

That is why the very beginning of the Bible is the word "*In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth*" (Genesis 1:1). It is Genesis 1:1. When we believe this word, all the rest becomes believable and we also come to know the providence of God. The word of John 1:1, "*In the beginning was the Word*," and the word of Genesis 1:1, that in the beginning "*God created the heavens and the earth*," meet in this way. 'The beginning' means the first. Since God created the heavens and the earth from the very first, we must believe it just as it is.

I, too, even after believing in Jesus, when sin was in my heart, had one thought leading to another without end. I would try to reach the end by thinking, and when there was no end I would

turn away, saying I did not know, and then think again. However much we reckon with our thoughts, if we do not believe that God made the universe, God cannot dwell in our hearts, and we cannot believe what God made either. But when we believe, there is nothing left to say. When God says He did it, what could we add?

When Adam, made on the sixth day, opened his eyes, the stars were twinkling in the sky and the Garden of Eden was truly beautiful. There was the tree of life and there were fruit trees, and at that time there were no thorns and thistles either. Adam could meet God, talk with Him, and know God. But we cannot meet God directly. It is because God is Spirit. We can meet and know God through the word.

“The Word was God”

John chapter 1 says, *“The Word was God” (John 1:1)*. The reason this Word is God is that Jesus was together with God the Father and with the Holy Spirit, and Jesus Christ was the Son of God the Father. If you are a human being, when you marry and have children, you give birth to a human being. Can you give birth to a dog? You cannot. This fact, that the Son of God is God, is the faith that becomes the foundation, and it is a tremendously important faith.

Jesus made the universe. Since it says the Word was God, Jesus existed, the word went out from His mouth, and by that word the universe and all things were made. Jesus was originally Spirit. Now, having put on the flesh, He came to this earth and took charge of our sins with the baptism He received from John. And by being nailed to the cross and dying shedding His blood, He received the judgment for our sins, and by rising from the

dead He saved us. Therefore, we can draw the image of Jesus Christ, but before He put on the flesh He was the same holy Spirit as God the Father.

Because Jesus is Spirit, He revealed Himself by His word. Jesus said that He is the Son of God the Father and God who made the universe. Since Jesus, who is God, made the universe and all things by His word, He was telling us to look at all those things and know that God made them. Which God? Jesus Christ, the Son of God the Father. When we look at the Scriptures, we can know this fact. He is the same holy Spirit as God and the Son of God the Father, and He made the universe and all things by the word He Himself spoke and revealed Himself. So we can know that the God who made this universe and all things is Jesus, who saved us.

Because God the Father is a holy spirit, He did not reveal Himself to us. God the Holy Spirit, too, is spirit, so even when He appears we cannot see Him. That is why John chapter 1 says, *“No one has seen God at any time. The only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, He has declared Him” (John 1:18).* God the Father revealed Himself through His only begotten Son, did the work of saving us from sin, and by making the universe and all things through that Son, He revealed that God exists. We see that God the Father revealed the Triune God through the Son, we see that He made the universe and all things, and we know and believe that God, saying, “Ah, God exists.” Even though He is not visible to our eyes, we meet God by faith.

Because Jesus is God, the same as the Father, He made the universe and all things by His word and revealed Himself through all the things He made. So we look at all things and know their mystery. Let us suppose we try to make a sunflower. Can we produce that color? However much we make colors with a computer, we cannot imitate that color that comes from nature.

Man, who was made in the image of God

John 1:2 says, *“He was in the beginning with God.”* The word *“He”* refers to Jesus Christ. Genesis 1:26 and 27 say as follows. *“Then God said, ‘Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.’ So God created man in His own image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them.”* Since He said, Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness, *“Us”* here refers to the three: God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. When the three made man, They made him in Their own image.

Because God made man in His own image, He also made man’s heart according to God’s nature. That is why man longs for what is eternal. We want to live forever, and we long not for what exists for a moment and then disappears, but for what is eternal. We also long for what is holy, what is without sin, and what is just. Eternity, holiness, and justice are the nature that the Triune God has. Man, though he himself is not perfectly just and does not act justly, always demands justice and fairness from others. He keeps complaining, *“What you are doing to me does not seem fair.”* Why is that? It is because we were made in the image of God. Even while living every day floundering in sin, we want what is clean and we want what is holy. Though we ourselves do not live cleanly, we want clean nature and we want clean people. Man is such a being.

“All things were made through Him”

John 1:3 says, *“All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made.”* All things means every world visible to our eyes and every world that is invisible. Scientists say that in the world of the Milky Way up in the sky there are also countless stars. The earth revolves around the sun, and they say that if the earth got even a little closer to the sun we would burn to death, and if it got even a little farther away we would freeze to death. These two float in space and revolve with great precision by the force of gravity, pulling on each other. Even during the time that you and I have been born into this world and have watched until now, they have kept revolving without change. God’s world is so wonderful and unfathomable that it is a world we cannot know with our reason. As I also said last time, the reason the sea water sloshes and makes waves is likewise that the sea water is pulled and moved by the gravity of the moon. The coming and going of the tides, too, is something that happens because of the force of gravity with which the moon pulls the earth and the rotation of the earth.

It says, *“All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made.”* Jesus Christ, the Son of God the Father, God who is the Word, made us and made the universe and all things. He made them together with the Father. When Jesus Christ said by His word, ‘Let there be light,’ there was light; when He said, ‘Let the light be divided from the darkness,’ it was divided; and when He said, ‘Let there be water in the sea,’ ‘Let there be fish according to their kinds,’ ‘Let there be birds flying in the air,’ everything He spoke came into being. Since the universe and all things came into being by the word He spoke, He is the God who created the heavens and the earth. So is the Father, and so is the Holy Spirit, but God especially wanted to

reveal Himself through the Son. Therefore, Jesus Christ is the God who created all things, the God who made you and me, the God who removed your sins and mine, and the God who takes you and me to the kingdom of heaven. What the Bible says is the truth.

How do scientists measure distance? When they fire a laser at a reflector installed on the moon, they measure the time it takes for that light to strike the moon and return, and calculate exactly the distance between the earth and the moon. It is because they already know how far light travels in one second. And on the basis of that exact calculation, they match the propulsion and the materials and launch rockets. Then what do scientists look at in order to develop such science? They develop it by looking at the word of the Bible. Even in the twenty-first century, they are trying to find out what this world is made of and what its materials are. But the Bible already said, *“In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. The earth was without form, and void; and darkness was on the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters”* (Genesis 1:1–2). When scientists look into that chaos and darkness, they say that enormous resources are contained in it. When God said by His word, ‘Let there be,’ ‘Let there be,’ it all came to be. Now in the twenty-first century, neither scientists nor archaeologists can deny the word of the Bible.

Without Him nothing was made that was made. We must hold on to this word. When you hold on to the word and believe with your heart, faith grows in your hearts. Knowing only in the head and passing by is not faith. Believing with the heart is faith. However good this microphone is, if I just pass by saying, that is a good microphone, it is not mine. It becomes mine when I take hold of it, saying, this microphone is really good. The word is the same.

Right now I am preaching the word under the title “God who revealed Himself by His word.” God revealed Himself by His word. How did He reveal Himself? He revealed Himself by saying, ‘Let there be,’ ‘Let there be,’ and so making the universe and all things exist.

Man in particular He made out of the dust and breathed the breath of life into him. Beasts and man are different. Man has a spirit and a soul—he has a spirit, he has thoughts, and he has a body. Beasts have only soul and body. That is why Ecclesiastes says that the soul of the beast goes downward, to the earth, and the soul of man goes upward. The reason man is the lord of all creation is that God made man with His own Spirit. That is why man is an eternal being and does not cease to exist even when he dies. God keeps him and then judges him, and those who did not turn out according to God’s will He judges forever. To those who believe the word of God He gives blessings forever. It is because He is the eternal One. The angels God made are also all spirits. When we read the Book of Revelation, it says that the seven Spirits, too, are before God. God is the One who can make as many other spiritual beings besides you and me as He wants, if He so decides.

Therefore, we must believe in God who is the Word. We must believe by faith in God who is the Word, who created the heavens and the earth. Dear fellow believers, do you believe? This faith is tremendously important. The gospel of the water and the Spirit is important too, but if this foundation does not support it, all the rest collapses.

“In Him was life, and the life was the light of men”

John 1:4 says, *“In Him was life, and the life was the light of men.”* God made Adam and Eve and made the universe and all things by His word, but the serpent deceived Adam and Eve and sin came in. But within the providence of God there was life. There was eternal life. Jesus Christ put on human flesh and came to this earth, took charge of the sins of man with the baptism He received from John, bore those sins and went on to receive the judgment for sin in our place, died, and rose again, and gave us new life. We have been born again. Since we lost the first life, we must receive the second life in order to live forever.

In Him was life, and this life is the light of men. That is, it is salvation. Jesus came to this earth, and because He loved you and me, He was baptized by John and bore your sins and mine, received the judgment and punishment for those sins, died on the Cross and rose again, became the God of you and me, and prepared the kingdom of heaven for you and me. This salvation is the very life and the light. This salvation is the gospel of the water and the Spirit.

“But Noah found grace in the eyes of the LORD”

Then, are we living well? Are we living perfectly? Are we living perfectly even after receiving the remission of sin? We are not. That is why people find it hard. But we must know this. In Genesis 6:8 it says, *“But Noah found grace in the eyes of the LORD.”* God made Adam and Eve, and mankind spread out, but they committed all kinds of sins. Noah was no special person; he was the same kind of human being. But Noah found grace in the eyes of the LORD. It means that he received the grace of

salvation, was saved from sin, became a child and one of the people of God, and became a person who would enter the kingdom of heaven.

We, too, though we are lacking, have been saved from the sin of the world by believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit. Though we live among people who do not believe, you and I have also found grace in the eyes of the LORD. We have received the grace of salvation and special love, become children of God, and become people who will go to the kingdom of heaven and live happily with God forever. This fact, that you and I have found grace in the eyes of the LORD, is connected with the truth that the opening of John chapter 1 speaks of.

Dear fellow believers, do you believe? Are you thankful? God loves you and me. Why is that? It is because we believe in God. *“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).* Since we believe in God, believe what God has done, and do what pleases God, there is no being on this earth more lovable before God than we are. That is why, however small a thing we do, if we pray for that work, God helps and answers. If we ask Him to soften people’s hearts, He softens them; if we ask Him to give grace, He gives grace. How much grace we have received, how much help we have received, and how many blessings we are enjoying as we live!

You may not know it well, but I know well the grace we have received. In the early days, the best food we ate as a snack in our church was instant noodles. When I went as a guest speaker to a meeting and preached, the best thing that church could gather money for and treat us to was instant noodles boiled in a big pot. When I was young, I had to eat two packs of instant noodles before going to bed to feel full enough to fall asleep. So every time I came back from one, my weight went up by two kilograms

a week, and later my knees could not bear it, so I had to regulate it. When our fellowship first started, it was absolutely not an abundant church like it is now.

But now God is treating us like Noah. Even though we are lacking, if we do what the Lord wants, God helps us in detail when we pray, because He loves us. We must know the fact that God is helping us, and we must be thankful. God is also preparing the future of you and me. God is such a One. So how thankful we are! God is the living One. I give thanks to that God. 

Sermon 2 by Paul C. Jong

The true gospel that the Apostle John testifies of

< John 1:6-13 >

“There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. This man came for a witness, to bear witness of the Light, that all through him might believe. He was not that Light, but was sent to bear witness of that Light. That was the true Light which gives light to every man coming into the world. He was in the world, and the world was made through Him, and the world did not know Him. He came to His own, and His own did not receive Him. But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name: who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.”

**The Son of God was manifested in order to destroy
the works of the devil**

When we look at the word of 1 John 3:7–9, it is written as follows. *“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.” Just as verse 8 says, the Son of God was manifested in order to destroy the works of the devil.

What did the devil do? He made man sin, made sin exist in the hearts of people, and by making them sin against God, he brought death to us. The Son of God removes that death, removes the sin in our hearts, and restores the relationship with God that was severed. He was manifested in order to destroy the works of the devil by saving us from judgment.

The devil put sin into the heart of our ancestor Adam, and he still does the same thing to people now. When a person commits sin, everyone else keeps silent, but who speaks to him? The devil speaks to him. He pecks at our thoughts, saying, “You sinned, didn’t you? You did this, didn’t you?” When he pecks at our thoughts, our hearts shrink, and when he pecks at our souls, we tremble with fear. And then he whispers, wouldn’t it be better to die than to live like this? The devil really exists. Whether it was the devil who said it or a companion, a person accepts the words thrown at him in sympathy with his situation. And then, saying, that’s right, that’s right, he even goes so far as to throw away his own life. Satan the devil is a fearful being. That is why Jesus Christ, the Son of God, came to this earth and destroys the works of the devil. He removes sin from the hearts of people, removes fear, removes death, and makes them go to the kingdom of heaven. The Son of God delivers us from death, from sin, from fear, and from destruction.

John the Baptist, the man sent from God

For that work, John 1:6 says, *“There was a man sent from God, whose name was John.”* It means that God sent a man

named John. Let us read together Malachi 4:5 and 6 in the Old Testament. *“Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet Before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the LORD. And he will turn The hearts of the fathers to the children, And the hearts of the children to their fathers, Lest I come and strike the earth with a curse.”*

God spoke to the prophet Malachi. It means that before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the LORD—that is, before God judges this world, before the second coming of Jesus—He would send Elijah. According to that word, 2,000 years ago, six months before Jesus was conceived in the body of the virgin Mary, God caused John the Baptist to be conceived. It was in the womb of the aged Elizabeth, the wife of Zacharias, who was serving in the office of priest.

While Zacharias was serving in the office of priest in the sanctuary, an angel appeared and announced, “Your wife Elizabeth will bear a son.” When Zacharias was startled and could not believe those words, the angel said, “Because you did not believe, you will be mute.” Since Zacharias came out unable to speak, he must have told his wife in writing. And his aged wife really did conceive, just as the angel had said, and her belly began to swell. When Elizabeth had been pregnant for six months, God sent an angel to the virgin Mary and told her that Jesus would be conceived. It was in order to fulfill the word of prophecy of the Old Testament.

He said, I will send you Elijah the prophet, and he will turn the hearts of the fathers to the children and the hearts of the children to the fathers. It means that Elijah would come and play the role of a mediator who turns the heart of God the Father to people and turns the hearts of sinners to God. He is the mediator of the gospel who directs the heart of God the Father toward the people who resemble His image, and directs the hearts of sinners

toward what God has done. Concerning the one who does that work, John 1:7 says, *“This man came for a witness, to bear witness of the Light, that all through him might believe.”*

“He is Elijah who is to come”

Then who is the Elijah whom He said He would send? The Scriptures point to John the Baptist. In Matthew 11:12–14 it says, *“From the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven suffers violence, and the violent take it by force. For all the prophets and the law prophesied until John. And if you are willing to receive it, he is Elijah who is to come.”*

Speaking about John the Baptist, the Lord asked the multitudes: What did you go out into the wilderness to see? Did you go out to see a king? Is not a king in a royal palace, wearing silk clothing? Did you go to see a prophet? Yes. And then He went on to say, *“Assuredly, I say to you, among those born of women there has not risen one greater than John the Baptist” (Matthew 11:11)*. It means that there is one whom God sent, and he is John the Baptist. In the Old Testament God said He would send Elijah, and in the New Testament Jesus said that the greatest among those born of women is John the Baptist. It means that he is greater than Moses and greater than the other prophets, and that he is the representative of mankind.

All the words of prophecy of the Old Testament are until John the Baptist. The Old Testament is the word of promise in which God said He would send the Messiah to mankind, and the New Testament begins with the birth of Jesus. And just as the Old Testament prophesied, John the Baptist, whom God sent, baptized Jesus in the Jordan River and passed all the sins of mankind on to Him. Through that baptism Jesus took charge of

the sin of the world. The word of Malachi, I will send you Elijah the prophet, and the word of Matthew, he is Elijah who is to come, both point to John the Baptist.

Some people ask where in the Bible it says that John the Baptist is the representative of mankind. But Jesus Himself said that among those born of women there has not risen one greater than John the Baptist. If the greatest among men is John the Baptist, then he is the representative of mankind. The Son whom God sent is the Savior of mankind, the Creator of the universe and all things, and our Savior. He was baptized by John, took charge of our sins, and saved us. We must know according to the Scriptures and believe according to the Scriptures.

John the Baptist is the link that connects the Old Testament and the New Testament

John the Baptist is the one who connects the Old Testament and the New Testament. He becomes the link because, while being a prophet belonging to the end of the Old Testament, he did the work of baptizing Jesus and passing sins on to Him. Here lies the reason the Scriptures say of John the Baptist that he turns the hearts of the fathers to the children and the hearts of the children to the fathers. John the Baptist did the work of baptizing Jesus and passing the sins of mankind on to Him, just as God commanded him.

Why is his name John the Baptist? Because he baptized Jesus, the word 'Baptist' was attached to his name. Elijah of the Old Testament was the prophet who showed the people of Israel that the LORD God is the true God and the self-existent Absolute One. On Mount Carmel he alone stood against the 850 prophets who served foreign gods, made a wager, and won. So the people

of Israel came to know that Baal is not a god and that the LORD is the true God. The people confessed their wrongs before God and tore down the filthy altars where they had served Baal. Israel offered sacrifices to God by presenting a sacrificial offering on the Day of Atonement, the tenth day of the seventh month, and at ordinary times as well they laid their hands on the sacrifice, passed their sins on to it, and offered sacrifices.

That is why Jesus spoke in Matthew 3:15. *“But Jesus answered and said to him, ‘Permit it to be so now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness.’ Then he allowed Him.”* It means that Jesus received the sin of the world passed on to Him with the baptism He received from John, and became our Savior by dying on the Cross shedding His blood as the Lamb of God and rising again.

Jesus took charge of all sins by receiving the baptism that John the Baptist gave in the Jordan River. Therefore, having become the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world, after nurturing His disciples on this earth, He was nailed to the cross at the age of thirty-three and, as He died shedding His blood, He said at the last, *“It is finished!” (John 19:30)*. It is the declaration that He had completely finished the work of removing the sins of mankind. It means that He finished that work of receiving the sin of the world passed on to Him by being baptized by John the Baptist, paying the price by giving up His life in their place, and dying in their place to save them.

The two goats of the Day of Atonement

The Old Testament showed this work in advance. Let us read Leviticus 16:6–17. *“Aaron shall offer the bull as a sin offering, which is for himself, and make atonement for himself and for his*

house. He shall take the two goats and present them before the LORD at the door of the tabernacle of meeting. Then Aaron shall cast lots for the two goats: one lot for the LORD and the other lot for the scapegoat. And Aaron shall bring the goat on which the LORD's lot fell, and offer it as a sin offering. But the goat on which the lot fell to be the scapegoat shall be presented alive before the LORD, to make atonement upon it, and to let it go as the scapegoat into the wilderness. 'And Aaron shall bring the bull of the sin offering, which is for himself, and make atonement for himself and for his house, and shall kill the bull as the sin offering which is for himself. Then he shall take a censer full of burning coals of fire from the altar before the LORD, with his hands full of sweet incense beaten fine, and bring it inside the veil. And he shall put the incense on the fire before the LORD, that the cloud of incense may cover the mercy seat that is on the Testimony, lest he die. He shall take some of the blood of the bull and sprinkle it with his finger on the mercy seat on the east side; and before the mercy seat he shall sprinkle some of the blood with his finger seven times. 'Then he shall kill the goat of the sin offering, which is for the people, bring its blood inside the veil, do with that blood as he did with the blood of the bull, and sprinkle it on the mercy seat and before the mercy seat. So he shall make atonement for the Holy Place, because of the uncleanness of the children of Israel, and because of their transgressions, for all their sins; and so he shall do for the tabernacle of meeting which remains among them in the midst of their uncleanness. There shall be no man in the tabernacle of meeting when he goes in to make atonement in the Holy Place, until he comes out, that he may make atonement for himself, for his household, and for all the assembly of Israel."

To put it briefly, on the Day of Atonement Aaron first offers the sacrifice of atonement for himself and his household. He lays

his hands on the sacrifice to pass sins on to it, kills it, takes its blood, and puts it on the horns of the altar of burnt offering. He takes that blood into the Most Holy Place, burns incense, sprinkles it with his finger on the east side of the mercy seat, and sprinkles it seven times before the mercy seat. After that he offers the same sacrifice for the people. In the tabernacle there are the Holy Place on the outside and the Most Holy Place on the inside, and the Most Holy Place is where the high priest can enter only once a year.

On the Day of Atonement there had to be two sacrifices. Verses 7 and 8 say, *“He shall take the two goats and present them before the LORD at the door of the tabernacle of meeting. Then Aaron shall cast lots for the two goats: one lot for the LORD and the other lot for the scapegoat.”* Aaron lays his hands on the head of the goat for the LORD and passes all the sins of the nation of Israel on to it. Then he kills it and takes its blood, and the flesh he cuts into pieces and burns on the altar of burnt offering. He takes that blood into the Most Holy Place, burns incense, and sprinkles it on the mercy seat. On the hem of the high priest’s robe there were bells, so that a sound was made whenever he moved. The people of Israel outside were reassured in their hearts as they heard the sound of those bells. They believed, “Our sins of a whole year have passed on to the goat today and the blood of judgment for our sins has been sprinkled, so we have completely escaped from sin.”

The scapegoat and the baptism of Jesus

After finishing all that work, there remained one more goat, the scapegoat. The word scapegoat, Azazel, means ‘sending away.’ Let us read Leviticus 16:20–22. *“And when he has made*

an end of atoning for the Holy Place, the tabernacle of meeting, and the altar, he shall bring the live goat. Aaron shall lay both his hands on the head of the live goat, confess over it all the iniquities of the children of Israel, and all their transgressions, concerning all their sins, putting them on the head of the goat, and shall send it away into the wilderness by the hand of a suitable man. The goat shall bear on itself all their iniquities to an uninhabited land; and he shall release the goat in the wilderness.”

This scene shows the baptism of Jesus in advance. Jesus was born on this earth by borrowing the body of Mary, and when He turned thirty, while John the Baptist was baptizing in the Jordan River, He Himself went forward to be baptized. Jesus is the Lamb of God, that is, the sacrifice that God sent. Aaron laid both his hands on the head of the live goat, confessed all the sins of the children of Israel, and put those sins on the head of the goat. Likewise, Jesus also went to John the Baptist, who was baptizing people in the Jordan River, and said, “Baptize Me.”

In the Old Testament, Aaron was the high priest and the older brother of Moses. Moses was the prophet who heard the voice of God directly and delivered it to the people. Aaron, as the high priest, was the one who offered the sacrifice for the people of Israel on the Day of Atonement and delivered the people from sin. In the New Testament, John the Baptist played that role of Aaron. Just as Aaron passed sins on to the goat by the laying on of hands, John the Baptist baptized Jesus and passed the sins of mankind on to Him. That is why Jesus said, *“Thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness” (Matthew 3:15)*. When Jesus was baptized and came up from the water, the heavens were opened and there was a voice, saying, *“This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.”*

Jesus, upholding the will of the Father, was baptized by John

the Baptist and received the sins of mankind passed on to Him, was nailed to the cross and died, rose from the dead, and became the Savior. He Himself became God's sacrificial lamb for us mankind. The substance of the sacrificial lamb is Jesus, but we mankind were all born as goats from the time of our birth. A goat never listens and does as it stubbornly pleases. We, too, do not obey the word of God and do as we stubbornly please, and only after we go through failure and realize it do we listen a little. It is because we are by nature a brood of evildoers. But we came to be in a situation where we had to die and go to hell because of sin, and we cried out to God that we had done wrong, and asked Him to save us. At that time God the Father sent His own Son, made Him the sacrifice to take the place of us who are like goats, and saved us.

Jesus received our sins passed on to His own body through John the Baptist, died on the Cross shedding His blood, and rose again, thereby completely finishing the work of removing the sins of mankind. God the Father finished all this work through His own Son. Therefore, the role of John the Baptist was to lead the heart of God to the people who resemble the image of God, so that people would not be sent to hell. The one who actually administered that work on this earth was Aaron in the Old Testament and John the Baptist in the New Testament. The sacrifice, too, was a bull, a sheep, or a goat in the Old Testament, and the body of Jesus in the New Testament. Jesus took charge of our sins through the baptism He received from John, died on the Cross shedding His blood, entered the tomb, and rose again on the third day, and became our Savior, the God of true love. In the old days He was made known to us only as the Creator God and the God who gave the Law, but now He has become the God who saves us who had fallen into sin. He is Jesus Christ, and this news of salvation is the gospel of the water and the Spirit.

Leviticus 16:22 says that when the goat bears on itself all their iniquities to an uninhabited land, the goat is to be released in the wilderness. Jesus, too, after being baptized, stayed on this earth for three years teaching His disciples, and after that He stood in the court of Pilate and gave up His body. Because He had already taken charge of the sin of the world with the baptism that John the Baptist gave in the Jordan River, He made no excuse at all. Even as He carried the cross up to Golgotha, was nailed, shed His blood, and suffered insult and shame, He did not say a word. He only said, “*Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they do*” (Luke 23:34). It was because He had taken charge of even their sins Himself. He said, Father, into Your hands I commit My spirit. When He was in too much pain, He said, “Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani, My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?” But at the last He said, “*It is finished!*” He saved us, saying, I have done it all perfectly, so do not agonize any more; I have removed all your sins.

The right to become children of God given to those who receive Him

That is why John 1:8–13 says as follows. “*He was not that Light, but was sent to bear witness of that Light. That was the true Light which gives light to every man coming into the world. He was in the world, and the world was made through Him, and the world did not know Him. He came to His own, and His own did not receive Him. But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name: who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.*”

The Light came into the world. When we had fallen into sin,

darkness covered the whole world and the devil covered the whole world, but when the Light came, the darkness retreated. Jesus, who is the Savior, came to the world He had made, but people did not receive Him. But those who believe that Jesus came to this earth and saved you and me completely from sin, that is, that He finished it all, have received Jesus. To those who accepted Him in their hearts He gave the right to become children of God. This right did not come about by the will of man, nor by blood; it came only from God. We lived fallen in sin because we did not believe the word God spoke. But God the Father so loved the world that He sent His own Son and finished all the work of saving us. Therefore, we accepted it by faith, received the remission of sin, and obtained salvation.

What is faith? Let us say there is a sunflower here. If a person who has seen a sunflower before and knows it tells a person who has never seen one that this flower is a sunflower, the one hearing it for the first time believes by trusting the one who tells him. But knowing and believing are different. Knowing is knowing by learning as knowledge at school. But when one comes face to face in actual life with what one learned and says, ah, this is exactly what I learned at school, then one comes to believe. We knew that the Triune God so loved the world that He loves us. Then, when we met that love and accepted and believed it, saying, Jesus has truly saved us from sin, He has finished it all, we have no sin, we became the people of God.

We, too, have become witnesses of the gospel like the Apostle John

What the Apostle John testified of is this: that Jesus the Creator made the universe, that God sent John the Baptist, and

that Jesus came to this earth, took charge of our sins, and saved us. Those who accepted this testimony in their hearts became children of God. They went from being sinners to being righteous, and were conveyed from the power of darkness into the kingdom of the Son of the love of God the Father. You and I have become the people of God by believing in this true gospel, that is, the gospel of the water and the Spirit.

What benefit is there in becoming the people of God? Satan the devil may pester us, but he cannot bring us down completely. When we are having a hard time and say, “Lord, help me. Protect me,” Satan the devil can no longer touch us. Those who have become the people of God receive such protection. But as for those who have not become the people of God, he accuses them of the sins they committed, saying, you sinned, you did this and that; he sows discord and bites at them. And when they are in anguish, he whispers, wouldn’t it be better to die rather than suffer such anguish? When human reason hears a plausible word, it takes that word as the right answer. The devil says things that are right and things that are wrong. But we must never fall for his words. We must drive him away, saying, In the name of Jesus Christ I command you, Satan, get away.

Jesus is my God and my Savior. I am one of God’s people and a worker of God. Even though I am lacking, God knows full well that I would be like this. If I turn back and live for God, God immediately makes even what has happened until now as though it had never happened. Since He is such a God, there is nothing to fear. The Holy Spirit stirs up such faith in our hearts. The Apostle John became a witness who testifies of the true gospel to us. We, too, have become witnesses of the gospel like the Apostle John. Since we, too, have met this gospel, we can do the work of passing it on to others. There is much to say, but I will leave it for the next time and close the message here. ☒

Sermon 3 by Paul C. Jong

Jesus Christ is the Lord of life

< John 1:6-12 >

“There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. This man came for a witness, to bear witness of the Light, that all through him might believe. He was not that Light, but was sent to bear witness of that Light. That was the true Light which gives light to every man coming into the world. He was in the world, and the world was made through Him, and the world did not know Him. He came to His own, and His own did not receive Him. But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name:”

John the Baptist, the first evangelist of the gospel

We know well the word we have read. There was a man who came to bear witness of the Light, and that man is John the Baptist. Since it says that this man came for a witness, to bear witness of the Light, that all through him might believe, it means that the first evangelist of the gospel is John the Baptist. It is because John the Baptist baptized Jesus and passed the sin of the world on to Jesus. He transferred the sin of the world to Jesus, and Jesus received the judgment for that sin on the Cross and rose from the dead and became our Savior. The one who took part in this ministry, that is, the ministry of Jesus, was John the Baptist, and it was God's way that all people would come to believe in Jesus through John the Baptist testifying of Jesus.

The gospel of the water and the Spirit and the hope of the resurrection

These days we are making Biblical Exposition books; we have finished Acts, and have done Romans, 1 and 2 Corinthians, and even Galatians. Through this literature ministry we are playing the role of John the Baptist, and by playing that role, people come to know and believe this gospel. Having preached the gospel so many times, we can now string it all together in one go. What is the gospel of the water and the Spirit? It is the gospel that Jesus was baptized by John the Baptist and had the sin of the world transferred to Him, received the punishment for sin on the Cross, and rose from the dead and became our Savior.

The gospel of the water and the Spirit refreshes our hearts, but among its parts, the part that Jesus rose from the dead in particular refreshes our hearts and gives us a living hope. The resurrection is truly a tremendous thing, yet we come to realize that we have not yet testified much of the resurrection. In the days to come, tribulation will come upon the world and the Antichrist will appear. At that time you and I will find out what great strength and hope it is to us that Jesus bore the sin of the world with the baptism He received from John, received the punishment of sin on the Cross, and rose from the dead. Since Jesus rose again, we, too, will live again. We will live again and place our hope in the new heaven and the new earth. Without the resurrection there is no hope at all. Because there is the resurrection, we can endure whatever suffering we receive and welcome it gladly, and because we can live again after death, hope arises.

When we look at the epistles of the Apostle Paul while doing the literature ministry, there are many passages where Paul does not lay everything out but speaks in a veiled way, half revealing

and half hiding. Now we, in the position of preaching the gospel, must unfold and explain those hidden words in detail. But the Apostle Paul writes without any superfluity, because he knew that what he said would become the word of God. We come to see that his talent and ministry can never be disregarded. The ministry of John the Baptist is in verse 8. *“He was not that Light, but was sent to bear witness of that Light.”* We, too, do the work of testifying. We preach at every opportunity, but there always remains the regret that we cannot say we have preached it all sufficiently. So every time we preach the word, we keep repeating this gospel: that Jesus had the sin of the world transferred to Him with the baptism He received from John, received the judgment on the Cross, and rose from the dead and became the Savior. We repeat it partly because the gospel is so good, but also because it is only when we repeat it for the listeners that it remains in their hearts and memories and they have the benefit of receiving the remission of sin.

The One who became the true Light to us is Jesus. It says, *“That was the true Light which gives light to every man coming into the world. He was in the world, and the world was made through Him, and the world did not know Him. He came to His own, and His own did not receive Him. But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name.”* The Lord came to this earth, received the baptism John gave in the Jordan River and had the sin of the world transferred to Him, received the judgment for sin on the Cross, and rose from the dead and became our Savior. Even though this fact is revealed so clearly, people are not being saved because they do not know it and do not accept it.

“He shall bruise your head”

We must know that God works, but Satan the devil also works. When we look at the word of Genesis, after Adam and Eve were tempted by the serpent and sinned, God came and asked, “Why did you hide? Have you eaten from the tree of which I told you not to eat?” Adam answered, “The woman whom God gave to me gave me of the fruit of the tree, and I ate.” It sounds as though he told the facts, but it is an excuse. When He asked the woman, the woman also said, “The serpent deceived me, and I did it.” All this happened because they did not believe the word of God. Here it is revealed that not believing is sin.

So in verse 14 He said, *“So the LORD God said to the serpent: ‘Because you have done this, You are cursed more than all cattle, And more than every beast of the field; On your belly you shall go, And you shall eat dust All the days of your life.’”* and in verse 15 He said, *“‘And I will put enmity Between you and the woman, And between your seed and her Seed; He shall bruise your head, And you shall bruise His heel.’”* This word is called the protoevangelium. God handed down a punishment to each of the serpent, Adam, and Eve, who had sinned. He made the serpent eat dust, made the woman bear children in the pain of childbirth, and made the man eat and live by the toil of tilling the ground.

Who is the Seed of the woman? It is Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ was born on this earth as the Seed of the woman and saved us. God and the serpent are enemies. *“He shall bruise your head”* Jesus Christ came to this earth, was baptized by John the Baptist, was hung on the cross and received the punishment for sin, and by paying the price of all sins He saved mankind from sin and gave salvation to those who believe. He Himself became the

Savior and shattered the plan of Satan the devil. “*And you shall bruise His heel*” It means that the serpent would do the work of entering into people’s hearts and inciting them to kill Jesus. Here it is prophesied that Jesus would be born as the Seed of the woman.

There are two kinds of people

How did Jesus, who was born as the Seed of the woman, deliver the gospel even to us in the twenty-first century? After Adam and Eve sinned, they had children, Cain and Abel. Abel was a man who believed in God, and Cain was a man who did not believe in God. Among the people born on this earth, there are those who believe in God and those who do not. In other words, the people of God and the people of the devil exist separately. Cain was one who belonged to the devil, and Abel was one who belonged to God. Abel inherited his parents’ way of offering sacrifices just as it was. Man had to die because of his own sin, but God killed a sacrificial lamb and clothed Adam and Eve with tunics of skin. Abel inherited that faith and offered a sacrifice with a lamb, while Cain offered a sacrifice with the produce of the field.

The two kinds of people always think the opposite way. There are those who are saved by accepting the fact that Jesus Christ was baptized by John the Baptist and had our sins transferred to Him, received the punishment on the Cross, and rose from the dead and became the Savior. On the other hand, there are those who disregard and do not believe what God has done, who try to be saved by their own efforts and try to become God themselves. Adam and Eve lost both of their children. Abel, who believed in God, was killed, and Cain left. After that they

had Seth, and the descendants of Seth continued generation after generation down to Noah. Noah was one who believed the word of God, but many people of that age did not believe. Noah built the ark and saved the members of his family who believed in God, and those family members spread their descendants over the earth. Among those descendants, too, there came believers and unbelievers. On the plain of Shinar, the unbelievers built the tower of Babel, saying, let us avoid being scattered and make our name known on this earth, and they rose up as a crowd that opposed God. But God scattered them. History continued on and David was born. David was a man who believed in God, and Saul was a man who did not believe in God. This history continued on until Jesus Christ was born by borrowing the body of a woman who believed in God.

Jesus Christ, who came as the Seed of the woman

Through David came Solomon, and among his descendants, too, believers and unbelievers continued on until Israel lost its nation. When the people of Israel were living as a colony of Rome, an angel appeared to Mary and said that the One to be born of her body would save His people from their sins. When Mary said, How can I bear a child when I do not know a man, he said that her relative Elizabeth had also conceived in her old age according to the will of God. Through Elizabeth John the Baptist was born, and through Mary Jesus Christ was born. Jesus Christ was born as the Seed of the woman. Unbelievers kept trying to kill those who believed in God, but God continued the lives of believers on and on, and finally caused Jesus Christ to be born on this earth.

When Jesus Christ was born, the wise men from the East said

that a king had been born on this earth. Then King Herod, saying, who but me could become king, ordered all the babies two years old and under to be killed. Before that, an angel had appeared to Joseph and told him to take Mary and the baby and flee quickly, and after they had fled, all the babies two years old and under in that land were killed. Because Satan the devil knew that Jesus Christ would be born as the Seed of the woman, he kept stirring up works of killing. But God protected and protected so that the Savior who would save mankind from sin could be born, and caused Him to be born by continuing the line of faith.

When Jesus Christ turned thirty, He went to John the Baptist and said, you baptize Me, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness, and He was baptized. His being baptized was in order to have the sins of every person of mankind transferred to Him. Just as one moves what is here over to there, He took charge of all the sins of mankind, received the judgment for sin on the Cross, died and rose again, and became the Savior who gives new life, thereby fulfilling the will of God. Genesis 3:15 speaks of this very work. Jesus Christ, who came as the Seed of the woman, took charge of the sin that Satan the devil had breathed into people's hearts with the baptism He received from John the Baptist, was hung on the cross and received the judgment, and rose from the dead, thereby completely demolishing the scheme of Satan the devil.

Satan the devil did not know that Jesus Christ had taken charge of the sin of the world, and thinking that he would be the victor if only he killed Jesus, he killed Jesus. But only after killing Him did he realize that he had been outdone. Jesus finished it all by being baptized by John the Baptist and being killed on the cross, receiving the punishment of sin. He removed all the sin that Satan the devil had breathed into mankind and the judgment of that sin, and He Himself became the Savior and

gave new life. *“For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord” (Romans 6:23).* By dying and rising again, Jesus gave new life to those who believe in Jesus and made us live. This is the work of God.

Jesus Christ is the Lord of life

Because Jesus Christ rose again, we not only have received the remission of sin but also obtain the hope of the resurrection, of living again. We do not live on this earth for thousands upon thousands of years. Look at nature. Right now we are standing at the point where winter has passed and spring is coming. In summer the grass grows thick, in autumn it withers, and in winter it bows its head and even dries up and dies. But when winter passes and spring comes, new shoots come up and it becomes lush again. This nature teaches us the fact that Jesus Christ is the Lord of life and the fact that there is a resurrection for us. We have not only received the remission of sin by believing in Jesus, but have also become those who will live again and live forever with the Lord. The purpose for which Jesus Christ came to this earth is to save His people from their sins.

Many people are born on this earth, and among them there are those who acknowledge God and acknowledge the word of God, and believe in the Lord who was baptized by John the Baptist and had sins transferred to Him, was judged on the Cross, died, and rose again; and there are also those who do not believe this gospel. In the days to come the Antichrist will come to rule this world, and he is one who does not believe. Even now many people say they believe in Jesus, but in fact there are many who do not believe in Jesus.

The Nicene Creed, which cut out the baptism

As we know well, in A.D. 313 the Roman emperor Constantine gave the freedom to believe in Jesus. But in reality it was not religious freedom that he gave. In A.D. 325 he made the Nicene Creed and took out the baptism, so that people could not fully believe in the Jesus who, at the age of thirty, had all the sin of the world transferred to Him with the baptism He received from John the Baptist, received the punishment on the Cross, died, and rose again—so that even if they believed, they could not receive the remission of sin. He cut out precisely the baptism alone. While saying that Jesus Christ came as the Savior and saved us on the Cross, he cut out the most important part, namely, the part where Jesus was baptized by John the Baptist and had our sins transferred to Him. Thus Constantine, too, became a man of Satan the devil, one who did not fully believe in Jesus Christ.

If you and I say we believe in Jesus, we must believe as follows. Jesus Christ was born on this earth, was baptized by John the Baptist at the age of thirty and had the sin of the world transferred to Him, went to the Cross and was killed receiving the punishment for sin, and rose from the dead and became our Savior. If we believe in this Jesus in our hearts, we become people who believe in God. But we must know the fact that if we believe leaving out even a single one of these, we are not people who believe in God, but people who belong to Satan the devil and oppose God.

So we must look back at ourselves and examine ourselves. If we have known it wrongly, we must resist Satan the devil. Since God gave man free will, it is not too late even now. “Satan the devil, I believe everything Jesus did. I believe it all—that He was baptized by John and had all our sins transferred to Him, that He

bore the sin of the world and went to the Cross and received the judgment for my sins, that He rose from the dead, and that He became the Savior for me. Why do you keep confusing this fact and keeping me from believing it? In the name of Jesus I command you, Satan the devil, get away.” We must resist stubbornly like this. And we must receive salvation by faith. It is of no use to say that one works signs and miracles and speaks in tongues while claiming to believe in Jesus. The question is whether one believes in the Lord who came to this earth, had our sins transferred to Him, received the judgment in our place, and rose from the dead and became the Savior. If by any chance you have not believed, I hope you will drive Satan the devil away and become a believer.

We obtain salvation by faith. Since He said, “*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), we become the people of God. The purpose is not for those who believe in Jesus to enjoy riches and glory on this earth; rather, God’s purpose and our purpose is to obtain new life by believing in the risen Lord and to live with the Lord in the Lord’s kingdom. They say that today there are about two billion people who believe in Jesus. Among them, how many really stand on God’s side and believe? Are they not merely pretending to believe? Are they not opposing the work of God, the ministry of Jesus Christ, while believing in the manner of worldly religion? If one becomes an adversary of Jesus Christ, one becomes an adversary of God and is judged by God. Believers are saved, but unbelievers become adversaries, are judged, and end up in the fire that is not quenched. We must not say that since people believe only in the Cross, I too will believe only in the Cross, like going to the market just because a friend is going. Other things may be summarized, but this gospel at least, salvation at least, must be

delivered just as it is, and not one of these parts may be left out.

The Lord came as the Seed of the woman and became our Savior. To save us from sin, He first had to come as a man; next He had to be baptized by John the Baptist and have our sins transferred to Him; He had to bear the sin of the world, go to the Cross, and receive the judgment for our sins; and only by rising from the dead does He truly become our Savior. The proof that Jesus became our Savior is the fact that He rose from the dead.

Let us preach the gospel of the water and the Spirit to the whole world in the last days

When we look at the world these days, we see the rulers of powerful nations acting like dictators. This shows in advance that such a person will come in the future. Artificial intelligence lets people make money. But when someone appears who uses artificial intelligence to seize all the money and power, that person will be able to do everything, and such a person becomes the Antichrist. In step with the development of artificial intelligence, the Antichrist will appear and bring death to believers. But those who are killed will be resurrected through the Lord, enter the Lord's kingdom, and live together with Him. Unbelievers will be judged, go into the fire that is not quenched, and suffer destruction. This is God's scenario. We do not know how much time remains, but there will be no good world. Until now we have lived in material abundance, but now that abundance disappears. And believers and unbelievers will be clearly revealed. It will be revealed that someone we thought was a believer in God was in fact an unbeliever, and such people will oppose and hinder believers and will not be with them. But believers will be together. At such a time we need food for both

spirit and body. Blessed are those who rightly know this food, prepare it, and share it out. Even if we die when it is time to die, even if we are martyred when it is time to be martyred, until then let us eat well, live well, and preach the gospel. Dear fellow believers, you must live with your wits about you.

Right now we must put our whole heart into the work of serving as the flower-calyx of the gospel and pray. God is on our side. God sent Jesus Christ through the Seed of the woman, saved us from sin, and gave us new life and the resurrection. I believe that God will have us testify fully of this gospel—of Jesus Christ, who was born as the Seed of the woman and became our Savior—to the whole world through us. God will surely accomplish that work. Even if we run around trying to preach, we do not see much result. In the age of artificial intelligence, we must make use of artificial intelligence. We must preach the gospel to the whole world through e-books and audiobooks. For this, literature mission is the best method. Now, even without coming to the website and downloading an e-book or audiobook, people can connect to our website on their mobile phones and listen right away. They say that if one does not have time, one can mark the place where one was listening and continue listening again at any time.

All the people of the whole world hear and believe the gospel in this way. All we have to do is deliver it properly. It says, *“Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God” (Romans 10:17)*. That Jesus Christ, who came to this earth as the Seed of the woman, had the sin of the world transferred to Him with the baptism He received from John, received the punishment for our sins on the Cross, and rose from the dead and became our Savior, is a fact that takes no more than one sentence. When we explain and deliver this fact from various angles, people each think about it and accept it from where they stand.

All who believe are saved, all who stand on God's side are saved, and those who stand on the devil's side and oppose go to hell.

There are many people in this world, but not everyone believes in God. Those who believe the fact that God exists can also believe, by that faith, this word that Jesus spoke. But those who do not believe in God do not believe. Even within one family there are those who believe and those who do not. If by any chance our hearts have gone wrong and we have become unbelievers, if we have become adversaries, I hope we will confess our sins before God, admit our wrongs, drive out Satan the devil within us in the name of Jesus Christ, and become people who believe in Jesus Christ as our Savior with a humble heart. I will close the message here. ✉

Sermon 4 by Paul C. Jong

The Lord who gave us the living hope of the resurrection

< John 1:14-18 >

“And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth. John bore witness of Him and cried out, saying, ‘This was He of whom I said, ‘He who comes after me is preferred before me, for He was before me.’” And of His fullness we have all received, and grace for grace. For the law was given through Moses, but grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. No one has seen God at any time. The only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, He has declared Him.”

“The Word became flesh and dwelt among us”

The Apostle John, a disciple of Jesus, begins the word again in John 1:14. In chapter 1 verses 1 to 13, he testified that the Word was God, that the One who created the heavens and the earth is that Word, and that He is none other than Jesus Christ, the Son of God. Jesus Christ was with the Father and was also with the Holy Spirit. People did not recognize Him, but He was testified of through a man named John, whom God sent. It says, *“He came to His own, and His own did not receive Him. But as*

many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name” (John 1:11–12). Becoming a child of God, becoming a worker of God, and becoming a person who enters the kingdom of heaven do not come about by blood or family line, but only through God. Only those whom God has newly begotten become the people of God. After delivering this word, the Apostle John sums it up once more in verses 14 to 18.

Let us read verse 14. *“And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.”* Jesus Christ, the Son of God who made the universe, made this universe by speaking the word Himself, but in the world He had made, the people He had made committed sin, became servants of Satan the devil, grew distant from God, and came to death. At that time, in order to save His people from their sins, Jesus came to this earth by borrowing the body of Mary in order to put on human flesh just like ours.

The Son of God the Father came to this earth, and through Him we came to receive the gift called salvation. The words He spoke after coming to this earth were full of truth. The grace that Jesus Christ gave us by coming to this earth is truly amazing, and the gift He gave is so great. Since He promised to save us from sin and came to this earth and fulfilled that promise, the works He did and the words He spoke were full and overflowing with true words, not lies. It is just as the word says, full of grace and truth.

Grace and truth came through Jesus Christ

The Apostle John goes on to say, *“For the law was given*

through Moses, but grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. No one has seen God at any time. The only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, He has declared Him” (John 1:17–18). Through Moses, God gave the law of God, that is, the Law, to the people of Israel and to the Gentiles. Through that law we came to know how great sinners we are, and we came to know how fearful and severe a punishment the judgment for sin is.

But grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. God the Father so loved the world that He sent His only begotten Son to this earth and gave us salvation as a gift through His own Son. That gift of salvation was truth, and not a lie. It was the flawless truth, love, and gift of salvation that came to us through Jesus Christ. This grace and truth that Jesus brought is none other than the gospel of the water and the Spirit, by which He removed our sins with the baptism He received from John and the blood of the Cross.

“The only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, He has declared Him”

And in verse 18 he testifies, *“No one has seen God at any time. The only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, He has declared Him.”* No one has ever seen God. But God the Father sent His own Son to this earth and, through the Son, revealed to everyone living on this earth what kind of God He is. It means that the God of love, who sacrificed His own Son to save us from sin, who loves and protects us, and who removed every sin whatsoever and made us His own people, is none other than God Himself. God is the God of love. This love is the heart of today’s text.

How can we know God? Jesus Christ, God who is the Word,

made this universe and all things. We believe that God made the world of the Milky Way, the mountains, the sea, and the fish of the sea. Then what kind of God is that God? Jesus Christ, the only begotten, who was in the bosom of the Father, revealed who God is. Jesus Christ, who came in human flesh, made us know, through the baptism He received from John, the blood of the Cross, His death, and His resurrection, that God is the God of love, the Savior God, and the God of eternal life. So we came to be saved by faith.

Why did the apostles preach the resurrection?

Jesus died on the Cross, rose from the dead, testified of Himself to His disciples for forty days, and then went up into heaven. After that, the disciples were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to preach the gospel. But what gospel did they preach? When we look at Acts chapter 4, they preached the risen Lord. I thought about it. Why did the apostles put the Lord who rose from the dead so much at the forefront of their preaching? They were people who knew Jesus well. Jesus not only saved us from sin, but in order to raise us again from death, He Himself was baptized by John, was hung on the cross and died, and rose again. He not only gave us the remission of sin, but also gave us the blessing of rising again from the dead.

Why did the apostles preach the resurrection? In A.D. 70, the Roman general Titus came leading an army and completely destroyed the nation of Israel. Everyone who was caught died by the edge of the sword, and many fled as well. For those who believed the gospel and those who did not alike, death had come as a reality. If you were caught, you died. What would be the hope for a person facing death? The resurrection. For us, too, as

we live on this earth, the thing we most want to refuse is death. Martyrdom, too, is death. What would a person facing death look to? He looks to the resurrection, to living again.

Where does our hope lie? The Lord took charge of our sins with the baptism He received from John, was nailed to the cross and died, and rose again from the tomb. Therefore, the Lord who saved us, whether we die then, die now, or die at any other time, gives us new life and the resurrection and makes us live again. That is why we have hope.

Because there is the resurrection, we have a living hope

The Lord said, *“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). Because we live again, we have hope. Because death is not the end, because there is the hope of the resurrection, we live in hope. Dear fellow believers, the Lord is our hope and our expectation. The only One on whom we can set our expectations is the Triune God. That is why the early Church preached the resurrection of the Lord even in such hardship. Jesus Christ came to this earth, was baptized by John the Baptist in order to save us, was nailed to the cross and died, rose again, and went up into heaven. And He will come again just as He went up, and take us. We, too, have death, and we, too, have the resurrection. It is a truly amazing and truly thankful thing. Once the hope of the resurrection arises, from then on we place our hope in heaven.

If there were no rising from the dead, there would be no reason to look to the Lord and no reason to look to the kingdom of heaven. Because there is rising from the dead and living again,

the kingdom of heaven also becomes our dream, and there arises the hope of living with the Lord forever, not only in this life but in the next life as well. Our Lord has brought us true hope.

We must stay awake, watching the signs of the last days

You and I, living in this age, are seeing the world change a great deal. I am single-minded by nature, so when a question arises I dig into it. A village on one of the islands of Hawaii, a state of the United States, was almost entirely burned down by a great fire. I thought about how that could happen. It was not a fire that started in a forest, and there must have been fire engines and a police station right next to the houses, so how could it all burn down in an instant, and how could so many people burn to death or die jumping into the sea? When wildfires broke out in Australia, they kept burning for six months. Countries with many trees have good machines for cutting trees, so if they cut down and cleared away the trees in the middle before the flames arrived, there would be nothing to burn and the fire would die down—so why could they not cut the trees down? In Canada, too, fires burned for months. Wondering how they could burn for so long, I listened to what the meteorologists said.

Because of global warming, the ice of the South Pole and the North Pole is melting away, and carbon dioxide, a greenhouse gas, traps heat inside the atmosphere, so the earth is gradually getting hotter. Meteorologists warn that the circulation of the huge ocean currents that flow through the sea like rivers is weakening or stopping.

The heat of the earth is distributed evenly only when hot sea water mixes with cold water and circulates, but as this flow is

blocked, some places are hit by extreme heat waves and droughts, while others are pounded by abnormal hail and floods. The rise in sea surface temperature also creates powerful typhoons.

The recent huge wildfire in Hawaii was likewise a disaster that occurred when extreme dryness and strong winds were added together. As the giant trees burned, the flames shot up to more than 1,000 degrees, and once the fire spread even to the roots deep in the ground, it was so bad that even firefighters and firefighting helicopters could hardly approach. Seeing such things, we must be on the alert. We must consider that the same disaster could come to our country in the future.

Dear fellow believers, for those who believe in the Lord there is the resurrection from death. Since Jesus, too, rose from the dead and went up, and said He would come again to take us, we, too, have death and the resurrection. Even before the time of martyrdom comes, we may die from natural disasters, and during the seven-year Great Tribulation we may be caught by the Antichrist and killed. A person dies once. But there is the resurrection, living again, and there is hope. What happens when we live again? Since the Lord comes and makes us live again, we take part in the first resurrection and enter the kingdom the Lord has prepared. Because we know and believe that the resurrection the apostles of the early Church preached is ours as well, we have hope. How gloomy it would be if there were no resurrection!

But these days, when we look at YouTube videos, there are many people who speak recklessly without even knowing the Bible. They teach that if one believes as they do, one will be protected by the Lord during the seven-year Great Tribulation. But there is no such protection. At that time it is one of two things—either one is killed and becomes one who takes part in the Lord's first resurrection, or one becomes a servant of the

devil and goes into the burning hell—and there is no separate way of being protected. The Bible warned that whoever adds to or takes away from this word will go into the lake that burns with fire and brimstone. I have a living hope because of this fact, that there is the resurrection from death. You, too, have a living hope. We die once anyway, but we live again, and the Lord takes us. The Lord revealed His love and told us all of these things. Dear fellow believers, is it not good?

We must get the gospel of the water and the Spirit preached to the whole world

I really want to preach the gospel of the water and the Spirit quickly. The members of our fellowship say, “Preaching like this is enough; how can we do more than this?” but I say that we must change the system. We cannot go on without changing the system. We must use artificial intelligence to get the gospel preached to the whole world, and then go when the Lord comes. Have we preached it all so far? Not by a long shot.

We must translate the first book, “Have You Truly Been Born Again of Water and the Spirit?” into the languages into which it has not yet been translated. The Lord wants us to preach the gospel of the water and the Spirit through literature. Then why do we spread the rest of the books besides this book, “Have You Truly Been Born Again of Water and the Spirit?” It is so that those who have been born again may eat food. When a baby is born, it cannot live if it is not given milk, can it? That is why we translate many books and make them into e-books, paper books, and audiobooks and upload them. The literature we spread consists of books that deliver the gospel of how the Lord came to this earth and saved us, that is, grace and truth. They are

books that testify how the baptism the Lord received from John, the blood of the Cross, His death, and His resurrection saved us. Translating the books into the language of each country, uploading them, and advertising them is preaching the gospel to the whole world.

We cannot say that we have preached the gospel to the whole world without having translated the gospel into the language of that country and uploaded it. That would not be just. The people of that country do not know English and do not know how to use the internet, but if we make it into a book for them, the pastors of that country can take our books and make them known to the people. If they believe, good; if they do not believe, there is nothing to be done; but only when the gospel has been preached everywhere like this can the Lord come as the returning Lord, judge this world, resurrect us, and take us to the kingdom of heaven.

The Lord has love, but He also has justice and fairness. It is because He gave us, too, the opportunity to hear the gospel of the water and the Spirit that there are believers and unbelievers in our country. God's righteous judgment is that He gives salvation, resurrection, and eternal life to those who believe, and puts those who do not believe into the lake that burns with fire and brimstone, together with the Antichrist and the devil, to suffer torment. God is just and shows no partiality. If we know the justice of God, we must translate all the books so that everyone can read them, upload them to the website, and advertise them to the whole world.

Do you ask how we can do all that work? We just do it. There is nothing that cannot be done. People find it hard and difficult, but that difficulty is only a matter of method; it is work that can be done. Being bound by fixed ideas and saying that it cannot be done except by this method is the old-fashioned way. We see

even the large corporations of our country going through difficulties because they failed to prepare in time for what suits the new age. We must not miss the time. We must take hold of the method that suits this age. The general who goes in front must point out the direction in which to advance. Presenting the direction is the leader's job. A leader is not a person who masters every skill himself, but a person who sets the direction. Right now we must translate the literature into the languages of each country and each tribe and upload it to the website.

When we have finished all the translations, we can pray, "Come quickly, Lord Jesus." It is because the Lord will resurrect us. But until we have finished that work, we cannot ask the Lord to come quickly. When we prepare and preach the gospel while waiting for the Lord, the seven-year Great Tribulation, martyrdom, the first resurrection, the second coming of the Lord—and that work in which the Lord takes us into the Lord's kingdom and we live gloriously forever—will all come to pass. We pray, but we must also get our work done. Even though we are few in number, we have set the direction, so all we have to do is put our strength into it in that direction.

At such a time the Lord is with us, accomplishes His will, resurrects us from death, and takes us to the Lord's kingdom. We live again. We are people who will live forever. Living again and living forever is the Lord's promise, and the Lord has already shown us our resurrection. Since the Lord died and rose again, the Lord's death is our death and the Lord's resurrection is our resurrection. The Lord Himself died and rose again as the promise that He would give us the resurrection. I will close the message here. ✉

Sermon 5 by Paul C. Jong

The testimony of the one sent from God

< John 1:29-36 >

“The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, ‘Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world! This is He of whom I said, ‘After me comes a Man who is preferred before me, for He was before me.’ I did not know Him; but that He should be revealed to Israel, therefore I came baptizing with water.’ And John bore witness, saying, ‘I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and He remained upon Him. I did not know Him, but He who sent me to baptize with water said to me, ‘Upon whom you see the Spirit descending, and remaining on Him, this is He who baptizes with the Holy Spirit.’ And I have seen and testified that this is the Son of God.’ Again, the next day, John stood with two of his disciples. And looking at Jesus as He walked, he said, ‘Behold the Lamb of God!’”

Today we have looked at the word of John 1:29–36. Verse 29 says, *“The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, ‘Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!’”* John the Baptist, who baptized Jesus, testifies, *“Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!”* Then where did Jesus go, bearing the sin of the world? He went to the Cross.

In the word of verses 30 to 33 appears the motive for which

John the Baptist met Jesus and baptized Him. He said, I did not know Him; but that He should be revealed to Israel, therefore I came baptizing with water. And he said that he testified according to the word, Upon whom you see the Spirit descending, and remaining on Him, this is He who baptizes with the Holy Spirit. In Matthew 3:11 and 12, too, John the Baptist says as follows. *“I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance, but He who is coming after me is mightier than I, whose sandals I am not worthy to carry. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. His winnowing fan is in His hand, and He will thoroughly clean out His threshing floor, and gather His wheat into the barn; but He will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire.”*

A man of God speaks by the testimony of the Holy Spirit

The people of God, whether in the Old Testament or in the New Testament, testify by the Holy Spirit who dwells in their hearts. They testify concerning the work God does. Ordinarily they look at the word, believe it, and follow it, but when they meet an urgent situation and pray to God, the Holy Spirit speaks in their hearts.

Long ago, I was going around trying to get a church building, and though I had no money, I was in the middle of negotiating. At that time the words “Be strong and very courageous” came to me in my heart. I myself was startled. Since it was a word spoken to me from within me, no one else could hear it. While I, feeling intimidated, was talking with the owner of the house, He said, “Be strong and very courageous”; and as the conversation with the owner continued, He said again, “Be strong and very

courageous.” Since He let me hear it three times in a row, I said in my heart, “I understand,” and spoke to the owner. I know that when you built this house, you built it for your own use. But if the Creator who made you had you build this house in order to have you lend it to the church of God, please think about what you should do. You have the authority to do as you please with this building, but if God says He will use this building, please discuss it with your children and contact me. Because He had said to be strong and very courageous, I spoke really strongly and courageously and came back. And then I got a call. He had discussed it with his children, and although they were all Buddhists, they had agreed to lease this building to the church. When you do the work of God, there are times when you have to make such decisions. God gave us material things abundantly as well, and that problem was solved.

I have experienced many things while serving the gospel. Several decades ago, an exposition was held in Sokcho, and it was said that many Russians would come. So we took our books there, stacked them up here and there, and handed them out to foreigners. But as many peddlers crowded into the exposition grounds, the organizers mobilized some strong-arm men to drive all the peddlers out. On the other side, a commotion broke out as they drove out the vendors. Before long, men with close-cropped hair and black clothes came to us as well and told us to take the books away. I answered: These are books that deliver Jesus to foreigners. We came to hand out these books and have stacked up this many, so we will hand them all out and then clear out. When they still told us to clear out, I gradually became worked up. Am I a peddler? Do not look at me like that. Is this a bad thing, or is it not a good thing? Is it not a work telling Russians, too, to believe in Jesus and go to the kingdom of heaven? We will hand them all out and leave, so I ask for your understanding.

The man who at first had said no, on hearing what I said, bowed his head and said, you are doing a good thing; hand them all out and then withdraw. I phoned our workers who were scattered about as well and told them, never pull out; we pull out only after handing them all out. So we really did hand them all out and came back. Even when threatened, we are not committing sin but doing a good thing, so we must not back down easily.

There was also such an incident with the land in Inje. Saying they would develop a stone quarry, they offered a little more than the officially assessed land price and tried to drive us all out. It was a place where we had held retreats with such devotion and where souls had been saved—did it make sense to give up that land at a giveaway price and leave? The ministers were tying rebar to build a house next to the boiler room. I was so angry I could not bear it, so I left the rebar as it was and went to pray. At first I told God the whole story from beginning to end, but later righteous indignation welled up. I prayed, shouting, Sweep away with water those who do evil in this valley; we did not come here to commit sin or to do wrong, yet they do such things. And then, in the summer of the following year, something happened. Going down from our retreat center there is a road and a valley, and water came down that valley until it overflowed. There was no sea above it and no dam either, so it was something that could not happen. In every valley the mountains collapsed, and the water was trapped and then poured down all at once. The valley, more than 100 meters deep, filled with water like a river that swept over even the top, and that whole place was washed away. Eight people who lived there died, but no one in the country knew what had happened in that valley.

When a person suffers a truly unjust thing, he may get angry. But when righteous indignation builds up in a person who does

the work of God, that righteous indignation is not the person's temper. John the Baptist, too, cried out to the Jews who claimed to believe in God, "Brood of vipers, repent!" The words may seem violent, but it is the Holy Spirit within who causes those words to be spoken. In this way, God teaches the people of God what He will do, and He works.

John the Baptist, whom God sent

When we look at the Gospel of Luke, the father of John the Baptist was Zacharias and his mother was Elizabeth, and both of them were elderly people, advanced in years. An elderly woman with a bent back could not have a baby, and it was the same for the elderly man. But while Zacharias was performing the office of priest inside the temple, an angel appeared and said, your wife will bear a son, and you shall call his name John. Zacharias did not believe the words of the angel, thinking that his wife was past the age of bearing a child. Because he did not believe, he became mute. Later, when the baby was born and it was time to name him, Zacharias wrote on a writing tablet, John. Since it was the custom to name a child after the family, people thought it strange. But the Holy Spirit moved the heart of Zacharias and caused him to speak the word of prophecy that this child would become a man of God who would lead many people into the way of righteousness.

In this way God sent John the Baptist into the wilderness and had him preach the word and baptize as well. And when Jesus came to John to be baptized, God spoke to him. He said, the One who has now come to you is the One whom God sent, and He is the Son of God; when you baptize Him, if you see the Spirit remaining upon Him, know that He is the Savior. That is why

John the Baptist, standing with two of his disciples and looking at Jesus as He walked, testified, “*Behold the Lamb of God!*” (John 1:36).

What is the sin of the world?

John 1:29 is a short word, but salvation is all contained in it. After being baptized by John, Jesus bore the sin of the world, worked for three years, and was hung on the cross and died. The day after baptizing Jesus, John the Baptist testified to the people, “*Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!*” and in verse 36, too, he testified, Behold the Lamb of God. It clearly says that Jesus took the sin of the world away, but people do not believe this word. They do not know that this word is spoken to them.

I, too, when I believed only in the blood of the Cross, interpreted this word as I pleased. The word says that He took away the sin of the world. But I thought that Jesus took away original sin, and that the sins I commit daily would disappear through sanctification by the time I died, after I had offered prayers of repentance and fasting prayers and lived according to God’s will. I interpreted the word according to my own thinking and believed it that way. But the Bible speaks simply. Because Jesus took charge of all sins by being baptized by John the Baptist, John the Baptist testified, “*Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!*” Jesus bore the sin of the world and went toward the cross, died on the Cross shedding His blood, and rose from the dead and becomes our Savior.

Thus the Bible says that He took away the sin of the world, but theologians divide original sin and personal sins. The sin inherited from the time one is in one’s mother’s womb, and the

sins committed after being born into this world in infancy, in youth, in adulthood, and in old age—all those sins put together are called the sin of the world. But people accept the concept that theologians and religious people speak of, and think that they remove their sins little by little, as if buying something on an installment plan. But Jesus was baptized by John once and for all, received the sins passed on to Him once and for all, was hung on the cross once and for all and died shedding His blood, and rose again and saved us. The words Jesus spoke on the Cross, *“It is finished!”* (John 19:30), also mean that He finished everything once and for all and that there is nothing more to be finished.

The sins you committed from the time you were in your mother’s womb, through infancy, childhood, adolescence, adulthood, and old age, until you die, are the sin of the world. Jesus bore those sins away once and for all by being baptized by John. But people cannot believe this fact. It is because deceivers taught them wrongly. Just as when you button the first button wrong, all the rest go wrong, they teach that even if you believe in Jesus you have sin, that if you sin you must receive remission again, and that even those who believe in Jesus go to hell. It is true that when we commit sin, a consciousness of sin remains. But even that sin Jesus took charge of by being baptized by John. When He said, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness, and was baptized and came up from the water, there was a voice saying, *“This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased”* (Matthew 3:17). God sent His Son and had Him take charge of our sins once and for all, and the Son died on the Cross shedding His blood and rose again, thereby saving us. Only when we follow this word as it says, understand it as it says, and believe it as it says are we saved.

As we live on this earth, we commit a tremendous number of

sins. Just as there is the greeting, did you pass the night safely, all kinds of sins arise even in the course of a single night, and we can commit any number of sins that would send us to hell. It is so in the daytime, and so in our thoughts as well. God said, *“Though your sins are like scarlet, They shall be as white as snow; Though they are red like crimson, They shall be as wool”* (Isaiah 1:18). But how could those many sins be remitted by the method theologians speak of? Let us say that one receives the remission of sins by offering prayers of repentance, fasting prayers, living a good life, and living according to the Lord’s will. Then we must know the fact that the sins we commit are far more than that. It is utterly impossible by our own efforts. If the Lord has removed our sins, we believe and have them removed; if the Lord has not removed all our sins, we go to hell. Salvation depends entirely on the Savior.

Those who accept the salvation the Lord has accomplished just as the word says are saved

For example, let us suppose that a ship we were on was wrecked and we are swimming in the sea. The government learned of it and sent a helicopter and lowered a rope. This person and that person took hold of that rope. Some grabbed the rope with the strength of their hands, and some wound the rope around their bodies and tied it under their armpits. When the helicopter pulled them up, those who relied on the strength of their hands lost their strength and fell when the wind blew and they were shaken. But those who had tied the rope around their bodies went up just as they were, whether they had strength or not, and the rescuers took hold of them and brought them into the helicopter. The rescue team shouted through a loudspeaker,

“Tie up your whole body; do as you are told.” Still, those who did not listen and said, I will hold on, so pull me up as I am, lost their strength on the way up, fell, and died.

Our salvation is like that. There is no need for us to exert our strength. It is not achieved by offering prayers of repentance. If we have a conscience, we must know that through prayers of repentance we cannot confess every one of our sins, and that the sins we commit are far more than those we repent of. Like the person who ties the rope around his body as the rescue team tells him, those who accept the salvation the Lord has accomplished just as the word says are saved.

“Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!”

Our Lord is the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world. When we say the world, we must ask ourselves what the world is and answer it. Everything visible is the world, so our parents are the world; the time when I was in my mother’s womb was the world; and the time when I was born, my infancy, my adolescence, my adulthood, my old age—everything until I die is the world. Then the sin of the world is the sin inherited in my mother’s womb, all the sins I commit, and all the sins I commit knowingly and unknowingly. Since it says the Lamb of God who takes away that sin, we must also ask how He took it away. How did Jesus take away my sins? How did He have them transferred to Him? In Matthew chapter 3, Jesus came to the Jordan River, was baptized by John the Baptist, fulfilled all righteousness, and received all sins passed on to Him once and for all. At that time my sins passed on to Him. The sins that passed on at that time are the sin of the world.

The sins I committed a few years ago remain in my heart, but those sins also passed on to Him; the sins I did not think much of are also the sin of the world, the sins I commit now are also the sin of the world, and the sins I will commit out of weakness as I go on living are also the sin of the world. Jesus took charge of all the sins of the world with the baptism He received from John and took them all away. Having taken them all away, He finished it all on the Cross and received all the judgment as well, and saved me completely. If you ask yourself and answer, and ask again and answer again, about this one short word, “*Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!*” you come to know that Jesus took charge of our sins by being baptized by John the Baptist. Jesus came 2,000 years ago and was baptized, yet He took charge even of the sins of you and me 2,000 years later.

We do not know how much longer this world has left. We cannot tell whether 100 years remain or 1,000 years remain. The world lasts until the last person of mankind is born and dies and the first heaven and the first earth come to an end. The sins of all the people within it, who are born with sin through their parents and live committing sin, are all included in the sin of the world. Jesus took charge of the sins of all those people once and for all by being baptized by John, bore the sin of the world and went to the Cross, died once and for all shedding His blood, and rose again and saved us.

We must also ask why Jesus is the Lamb of God. To know the Bible properly, nothing remains if we merely read straight through; we must read while asking questions and analyzing. Because this word is the truth, if we believe it just as it says, we are exactly right. When I, too, believed as the word says, the Holy Spirit came upon my heart, and the Holy Spirit told me that I have no sin. When I believed the word, I came to know that sin

disappears. That is why I read the word of the Bible and deliver it to you. If you, too, understand the word and believe it as it says, sin disappears from your hearts, faith arises, and the Holy Spirit comes into your hearts.

The Triune God made man in His own image, but man was deceived by Satan the devil and committed sin. God went to Adam and Eve and rebuked them, but He promised to save them with a sacrifice. And He killed an animal and made tunics of its skin for Adam and Eve and clothed them. It was the promise that He would remove their sins with a sacrifice, deliver them from sin, and make them the people of God. This promise is called the protoevangelium, the primal promise. The word that the Son of God became the sacrifice for you and me, took charge of our sins with the baptism He received from John, received the judgment once and for all, and came to save us from sin is none other than *“Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!”*

Even by analyzing this one word alone, one can certainly be saved. If we search here and there in the Bible, we get confused. When we do not even know well the text laid open before us, we do not come to know it by constantly reading other Scriptures. The human mind is narrow, and once one thing goes in, there is no room to take in the next. That is why, whenever possible, I want to speak only about the text that has been read. But people today do not know this word; they say that even though they believe in Jesus they are sinners, they ask for the Holy Spirit to come upon them, and they ask Him to come to this place and receive their worship. They do this while having no assurance of going to the kingdom of heaven and while having sin in their hearts.

Without the testimony of John the Baptist, no one can know the saving work of Jesus

The testimony of John the Baptist is tremendously important. If John the Baptist had not testified of Jesus, no one could know that Jesus is the Lamb of God, that Jesus took charge of our sins with the baptism of John the Baptist, that He shed His blood on the Cross, and that He rose again for us. It says that no one has seen God, but God the Father has revealed Himself through His own Son. Then who is the one who testifies of what He revealed? It is John the Baptist. It says there was a man sent from God, whose name was John; he was not that Light, but was sent to bear witness of that Light. After baptizing Jesus, John the Baptist testified, “*Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!*” and testified that He is the Savior of mankind. If we do not accept the testimony of John the Baptist, we cannot know who Jesus is.

How could John the Baptist know this fact? The Holy Spirit told him. When Jesus came to be baptized, too, the Holy Spirit told him that this One is the Son of God. All righteousness, of which Jesus spoke, means that it is fitting for you to pass the sin of the world on to Me by baptism and for Me to take charge of the sin of the world by being baptized. Because John the Baptist knew that meaning, he testified, “*Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!*” In fact, the history of the Bible is completed by the servants of God of the Old Testament, the testimony of John the Baptist, and the ministry of Jesus. Many prophets of the Old Testament testified that Jesus would come and save us. But the one who actually caused that promise to be fulfilled was John the Baptist, who was sent from God.

John the Baptist was born as the son of Zacharias. Since Zacharias performed the office of high priest, John the Baptist is

the son of a high priest. John the Baptist baptized Jesus at the age of thirty. Why did he have to wait until he turned thirty? It is because thirty is the age at which one can fulfill the role of the high priest of mankind who passes the sins of mankind on to Jesus. A Levite obtained the qualification to serve in the temple at the age of twenty-five, and the high priest obtained the qualification to perform the office of priest at the age of thirty. That is why the descendants of Aaron, when they turned thirty, received the laying on of hands on their heads, were anointed, and were consecrated. It is exactly the same.

The high priest of the earth was standing in the Jordan River, and the Son of God, the High Priest of heaven and the sacrifice for mankind, came to this earth as the Lamb of God and stood before John the Baptist. When Jesus tried to be baptized, John the Baptist tried to prevent Him, saying, *“I need to be baptized by You, and are You coming to me?”* (Matthew 3:14). Jesus answered, *“Thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness”* (Matthew 3:15), and then John allowed Him. At this time all the sins of mankind passed on to Him. The reason Jesus could become the Lamb of God is not only that He was sent by the will of God the Father, but also that He was baptized by John the Baptist and received the sins of mankind passed on to Him. He was baptized by John in order to become the sacrifice for your sins and mine, the sins of mankind. Since He received the sins passed on to Him, since He received the laying on of hands, He had to die on the cross. In the Old Testament, the sacrifice that had received the laying on of hands was killed, its blood was taken, and its body was cut into pieces and burned and offered to God. In exactly the same way, Jesus, too, bore the sin of the world through His baptism, went to the Cross, was nailed and shed His blood, said, It is finished, and died, and came back to life and became our Savior, thereby becoming the Lamb of God.

Because John the Baptist had baptized Jesus, he could point to Jesus and testify, behold, that One is the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world. It was the testimony that since the sin of the world had already passed on to the body of Jesus, He was bearing that sin and going to the Cross. Through this testimony we came to know that Jesus is the true Savior. Without the testimony of John, there is no one who could know it on his own. In the Old Testament there were countless people sent by God, but in the New Testament the man sent by God is John the Baptist. And the Gospel of John continues to say that by believing in the One whom God sent, Jesus Christ, we obtain salvation and obtain the food of life. We must receive the testimony of the one sent by God.

I, too, met the Lord through the word. At first, having received the remission of sin, I intended to live as a layman. I did not want to do again that work of staying up all night preparing sermons and racking my brains three days a week. But after I met the Lord, I prayed to the Lord, I will preach this to the whole world. I made the vow because I was so thankful that the Lord had removed my sins. And at one time I also thought that I would not become a leader but, as a layman, would make a lot of money and supply everything the church needed. I, too, have a knack for making money. From childhood, whenever I looked at things, ideas for making them better came to me constantly, and so I even filed thirty-some patents. But if I plunged into business, I would be bound by it and unable to do the work of serving the gospel, so now, even when such a thought comes to me, I deliberately shake my head to get rid of it. It is because a person who plans must not get absorbed in the work in order to be able to set the direction.

In this age, too, there are people sent by God. God sent me, and God sent you as well. Since He made us hear the gospel, made

us believe, and made us do this work, we are people sent by God. There are times when people disregard and despise us. But I have the self-respect of being one sent by God. If one does not listen to the words spoken by the one sent by God, one is cursed and goes to hell. Ordinarily I treat people humbly, but there are times when I speak sternly to those who trample on the gospel.

The greatest among those born of women

John the Baptist is the one who testifies of Jesus. Then did Jesus acknowledge the ministry of John the Baptist? Let us ask the question and look up the word. Let us read together Matthew 11:10–14. Verse 10 says, *“This is he of whom it is written: ‘Behold, I send My messenger before Your face, Who will prepare Your way before You.’”* This word is what the prophet Malachi prophesied in Malachi 3:1. It means that God the Father sent John the Baptist before Jesus, to prepare the work Jesus would do after coming to this earth.

What work did He have him prepare? John the Baptist went out into the wilderness and cried out, eating locusts and wild honey. “Repent, you brood of vipers!” At first people thought he was a madman. But neither his clothing nor his speech was ordinary. At that time there had been no servant of God in Israel for 400 years. From the end of Malachi in the Old Testament until the Gospel of Matthew was written, for 400 years no servant of God had appeared. The people waited and waited to know the will of God through the word delivered by a servant of God. Then an extraordinary man appeared in the wilderness, crying out for repentance, saying, do not boast to yourselves that you are the descendants of Abraham; if you are the descendants of Abraham, do the deeds of Abraham and have faith. The Jews

began to gather, wondering whether that prophet might be the Elijah whom God had said He would send. John was baptizing people in the Jordan River. John the Baptist pointed out the people's sins, thereby preparing them so that when Jesus appeared they could believe in Jesus and have their sins washed away. This is the very work of which Jesus spoke, quoting the Old Testament Scriptures.

Verse 11 says, *"Assuredly, I say to you, among those born of women there has not risen one greater than John the Baptist; but he who is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he."* That he is the greatest among those born of women does not refer to the size of his body; it refers to the representative. In the Old Testament there is Moses, and after him there are many prophets such as Elijah, Elisha, Samuel, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and Daniel. Yet John the Baptist is the greatest among those born of women. It means that as a servant of God he is the representative of mankind. It speaks of the one who, as the representative of mankind, would baptize Jesus and pass the sin of the world on to Him. But since he who is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he, it means that he is the greatest on this earth.

Verse 12 says, *"From the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven suffers violence, and the violent take it by force."* It means that because John the Baptist passed the sins of mankind on to Jesus, people were able to receive the remission of sin by faith and enter the kingdom of heaven. The kingdom of heaven became the possession of believers. The kingdom of heaven was opened to those who accept the testimony of John the Baptist and believe that Jesus took charge of the sin of the world, was judged on the Cross and died, and came back to life and became our Savior. Being saved not by works but by faith began from the days of John. It is not the strong and those who throw tantrums who enter; rather, those who, however lacking

they may be, believe the testimony of John the Baptist and the ministry of Jesus enter the holy kingdom of God, where there is not a single sin, and live forever. To those who receive Him, those who accept Him, those who believe in His name, He gave the right to become children of God.

Without the testimony of John the Baptist, no one can know the fact of what Jesus accomplished. Who besides John the Baptist baptized Jesus? Did Daniel? Did Moses, Elijah, or Elisha? No one did. The prophets only prophesied that He would come and take charge of our sins. But God sent John the Baptist six months ahead of Jesus, and had him baptize Jesus and testify of Him. *“Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!”* That One is the Savior of mankind sent by God the Father; He was baptized through me and is now going to the Cross bearing all the sins of the world. By believing in Him, you can enter the kingdom of heaven, receive the remission of sin, and become the people of God. This is how John the Baptist testified.

Verse 13 says, *“All the prophets and the law prophesied until John.”* What the prophets of the thirty-nine books of the Old Testament, from Genesis to Malachi, prophesied is all a prophecy of the ministry of Jesus. It means that that prophecy is until John. The one who received the promise of God and caused that promise to be fulfilled, the one who baptized Jesus and caused the promise to be fulfilled, is John the Baptist. The One who took charge of our sins is Jesus Christ, who received the sins passed on to Him through John the Baptist. Verse 14 says, *“If you are willing to receive it, he is Elijah who is to come.”* It means that you must receive it gladly. The Elijah of whom Malachi 4:5 says, *“Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet Before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the LORD,”* is none other than John the Baptist.

“You shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free”

John the Baptist is the one who fulfilled the ministry of the last high priest on this earth. Jesus, as the High Priest of the kingdom of heaven, is the Savior who, so that mankind could enter the kingdom of heaven, took charge of the sins of mankind in His own body through the baptism He received from John, shed His blood on the Cross, died and rose again, and saved mankind from sin. We are saved by believing in the testimony of John the Baptist and the ministry of Jesus. This truth of salvation is the word *“Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!”* and it is the gospel of the water and the Spirit.

All we need to do at this time is to know the truth through the word. He said, *“You shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.”* When we know the truth through the word, the truth saves you from the sin that binds your hearts, and from judgment. You come to know the fact that the One who saved us, Jesus Christ, God who is the Word, has become your Savior. We receive Him in our hearts by faith and are saved. Dear fellow believers, I hope you will believe. I will close the message here. ☒

Sermon 6 by Paul C. Jong

Those who became disciples through the testimony of John the Baptist

< John 1:37-42 >

“The two disciples heard him speak, and they followed Jesus. Then Jesus turned, and seeing them following, said to them, ‘What do you seek?’ They said to Him, ‘Rabbi’ (which is to say, when translated, Teacher), ‘where are You staying?’ He said to them, ‘Come and see.’ They came and saw where He was staying, and remained with Him that day (now it was about the tenth hour). One of the two who heard John speak, and followed Him, was Andrew, Simon Peter’s brother. He first found his own brother Simon, and said to him, ‘We have found the Messiah’ (which is translated, the Christ). And he brought him to Jesus. Now when Jesus looked at him, He said, ‘You are Simon the son of Jonah. You shall be called Cephas’ (which is translated, A Stone).”

Before we enter the text, let us look back at the preceding word. John the Baptist heard the voice of the Holy Spirit saying, “When you baptize, if you see the Spirit come upon someone, know that He is the Messiah who is to come.” And when he baptized, he saw the Spirit come upon the head of Jesus, and he knew that this One is none other than the Messiah. John the Baptist baptized Jesus and passed the sins of mankind on to Him,

and the next day, seeing Jesus coming toward him, he testified, “*Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!*” (John 1:29). It was the testimony that that One is none other than the Savior and the Messiah of Israel, the Son of God, and the Messiah who took charge of our sins with the baptism He received from John and would go to the Cross and receive the judgment for our sins. And again the next day, while he was with his disciples, he saw Jesus walking and testified, “*Behold the Lamb of God!*” (John 1:36), testifying as many as two times.

Then verse 37 follows. “*The two disciples heard him speak, and they followed Jesus.*” Whose words did they hear and follow? It means that the disciples of John the Baptist heard the testimony of their teacher, namely the word, Behold the Lamb of God, and followed Jesus.

Looking at this word, I came to think, this is truly amazing, this is truly so. It is because after I met the Lord through the word, I tried preaching the gospel. I know well how hard it is to gain that one person, a person who hears the gospel with his ears, believes with his heart, receives the remission of sin, and becomes a disciple of Jesus Christ together with me. Dear fellow believers, do you think this work is easy? It is absolutely not easy. After I met the Lord, I preached the gospel countless times, and countless people received the remission of sin. When I was young, I spoke clearly, precisely, and quickly. Since each time I preached I had to preach everything from the Old Testament to the New Testament, I would talk all day long and preach until my lips blistered. Preaching like that all day long, I also realized that this would not do, that I could not manage it by my own strength. Preaching the gospel and pastoring like that, I came to Sokcho, established a church, and prayed to preach the gospel to the whole world. But I know how hard it is to raise up even one person who believes in the gospel of the baptism, which the Lord

gave us, as I do, and who will serve the gospel with the same heart and the same faith.

The first disciple of Jesus was John the Baptist

Dear fellow believers, who would be the first disciple among the disciples of Jesus? Andrew appears in the text, and Peter appears too. When Andrew brought Peter, Jesus said, You are Simon the son of Jonah; you shall be called Cephas. Jesus knew that Peter would become a man of good faith. Then one might say Andrew, or one might say Peter, but the first disciple of Jesus was John the Baptist.

Of course, Jesus did not call him directly. God the Father and the Holy Spirit sent John the Baptist six months before Jesus. When Jesus turned thirty, John the Baptist was baptizing in the Jordan River, and he baptized Jesus, who came to be baptized. When he baptized Jesus, he saw the Spirit come upon Him and, just as the Holy Spirit had said, he knew, “Ah, this One is the Savior.” And because he believed, he testified, “*Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!*” First, he testified because God the Father commanded him to, and second, he could testify because, after baptizing Jesus, he believed that this One is none other than the Messiah who was to come and the Savior.

When I say this, people will be puzzled. But the text tells us. John 1:6 and 7 say, “*There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. This man came for a witness, to bear witness of the Light, that all through him might believe.*” John the Baptist came to this earth because God sent him, and having come, he baptized Jesus and knew that Jesus Christ is the Savior of mankind. He met Jesus, saw the Spirit come upon Him, and

believed because he knew that Jesus had taken charge of the sin of the world and would die on the Cross. John the Baptist met Jesus, baptized Jesus, believed, and testified. Therefore, John the Baptist is the first disciple.

We, too, have become disciples of Jesus by believing in Jesus as the Savior through the testimony of John the Baptist

Jesus made John the Baptist His disciple, and then, as verse 37 says, He made the two disciples of John the Baptist—Andrew and one whose name is not revealed—His disciples. After that, Peter, Philip, and even Nathanael became disciples all at once. John the Baptist, Andrew, another one, Peter, Philip, and Nathanael—six people. And as He went on His way, He saw Matthew sitting at the tax office and said, Follow Me, so they became seven, and one after another they became twelve.

Through whom did Jesus work? Jesus came to this earth and did the ministry of saving mankind from sin by making John the Baptist His disciple. Jesus, too, did not work alone, and now you and I do not work alone either. This work cannot be done alone. Because John the Baptist was the very first to believe in the saving work of Jesus, because he met Jesus, the gospel of the baptism could be testified of through him. Andrew, too, heard his teacher John the Baptist testify of what he believed. When their teacher testified, “*Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!*” the two disciples who were with him followed Jesus.

John the Baptist wanted to send all his disciples to Jesus. Because he testified to his disciples of who Jesus is, those disciples, too, could believe in Jesus. It is just like when we

deliver the gospel of the water and the Spirit to other people and they meet Jesus. Is it not amazing? We, too, through that ministry in which John the Baptist baptized Jesus and through the testimony of John the Baptist, came to know that Jesus is our Savior, and could believe in our hearts and follow Him. We, too, have become disciples of Jesus by believing in Jesus as the Savior through the testimony of John the Baptist. Jesus, too, called John the Baptist and his disciples, and then established the twelve disciples and did the ministry of the gospel on this earth. This gospel we preach is not a gospel we made up, but the gospel clearly revealed in John chapter 1. We come to the conclusion that a person who does not know the testimony of John the Baptist cannot meet Jesus.

When John the Baptist, who was sent from God, was crying out in the wilderness, Repent, you brood of vipers, people came, confessed their sins, and were baptized. The role of John the Baptist in rebuking the sins of the people and baptizing them was to tell them to repent, turn back, and have their sins washed away. But the baptism that Jesus went to John the Baptist and received is different. John the Baptist baptizing Jesus was passing all the sins of mankind on to Jesus. And John the Baptist testified, Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world. Through that testimony people could believe, saying, that One takes charge of our sins with His baptism, receives the judgment on the Cross, rises from the dead, and becomes our Savior. Once they believed, the Holy Spirit was in their hearts, so they could testify of the gospel and became witnesses of Jesus Christ.

The two disciples in the text were disciples of John the Baptist. They received the testimony of their teacher and knew that Jesus is the Savior who took charge of the sin of this world and the Son of God, and so they could follow Jesus. It means that from the beginning they followed Him knowing that He is

the Savior who, as the Lamb of God, takes away the sin of the world. There is something we must remember from today's text. It was not just anyone who heard that word and followed; it was the disciples of John the Baptist who followed. Because they believed as their teacher did, because they believed the word of God testified of through their teacher, they could follow Jesus. Is it not the same with us? When those who are ahead follow the Lord by faith and testify, you, too, become those who follow and believe in the Lord like those who are ahead. Through the testimony of John the Baptist, we came to know the fact that Jesus is the true Savior, that He was baptized in order to take charge of our sins, and that He was hung on the cross and died shedding His blood and rose again and became the true Savior. And by believing, we received the remission of sin and became His disciples.

There is no telling how much the Gospel of John says. It is so detailed that if one were to lecture on it concretely in a mission school, one could preach on it for a whole month. John the Baptist, the servant of God whom God the Father sent to this earth, became a disciple who believed in Jesus Christ, became a saved person, became a disciple of Jesus who testifies of the gospel, and became a disciple who sent even all his own disciples to Jesus.

John the Baptist is not a failure

Then how do people today speak of John the Baptist? They say absurd things. John the Baptist is nothing, John the Baptist is one who failed—every denomination says so with one voice. On what evidence do they say this? When John the Baptist was imprisoned, he sent his disciples to Jesus to ask, Are You the Messiah who is to come? Jesus said to the disciples of John, Go and tell your teacher that the mute speak, the blind see, the lame walk, and the kingdom of heaven is at hand. The disciples returned and told John the Baptist. With this text, people say that John the Baptist, imprisoned, fell into temptation and doubted that Jesus is the Savior, and so became a failure whose faith collapsed.

Is that really so? Would John the Baptist have sent his disciples because he could not believe in Jesus and doubted Him? John the Baptist knew that he would be martyred in prison. He was a man with the spirit of, He must increase, but I must decrease. So he sent his disciples to Jesus in order to prepare a place for his disciples to go after he died, and to have them hear directly the words Jesus spoke and believe. I have said it many times in every book. Read the context before and after. Where in the text does it say that he doubted? To look at the word, one must read from beginning to end to see where a single context begins and ends, and then speak; one must not pull out a single verse and speak of it. Dear fellow believers, a person who disregards John the Baptist cannot meet Jesus. He absolutely cannot meet Him. What kind of faith can a person who disregards the ministry of John the Baptist have, even if he believes in Jesus? Is the blood of Jesus who died on the Cross—is that alone everything? We must know that the result of the Cross exists because the fact that He bore away the sin of the world comes before it.

We must be born again of water and the Spirit

With religious faith one cannot be born again of water and the Spirit. Jesus Himself said to Nicodemus, *“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). The very first thing Jesus did in order to save mankind when He came to this earth and began His public ministry was to be baptized by John the Baptist and receive the sins of mankind passed on to Him. But if one disregards this work and believes only that Jesus was hung on the cross and died, that faith is religion. Even if one says he believes that Jesus is the Savior and believes that He died on the Cross, with that faith alone one cannot be born again of water and the Spirit.

What is the water? It is the baptism Jesus received from John the Baptist in the Jordan River. Then what is the Spirit? It is that work God planned. It was God’s plan and God’s will to send His Son Jesus Christ to this earth, have Him baptized to pass the sins of mankind on to Him, have Him die on the Cross shedding His blood, and resurrect Him from death, in order to save mankind. When we believe the fact that, according to that will, Jesus came to this earth, was baptized by John the Baptist and took charge of our sins, was hung on the cross, and rose from the dead and became our Savior, we receive the remission of sin by the water and the Spirit. Thus we are born again, become the people of God, and enter the kingdom of heaven. When the saints of the early Church testified of Jesus, they testified of the death and resurrection of Jesus. Because Jesus took charge of our sins, died on the Cross, and rose again, we, too, have a new hope of living again. If there were no rising again from the dead for you and me, where would be the benefit of believing in Jesus?

Through the testimony of John the Baptist we came to know and believe who Jesus is

Jesus made John the Baptist, whom the Father sent, His first disciple, made two of his disciples His disciples, and also made Simon Peter, whom Andrew brought after preaching the gospel to him, His disciple. After that, Philip appears. They were all people from the same town. Philip went to Nathanael and told him that he had met the Messiah. When Nathanael kept doubting, he told him to come and meet Jesus and then talk. When Nathanael came to Jesus, Jesus saw him and said, “*Behold, an Israelite indeed, in whom is no deceit!*” (John 1:47). When he asked, How do You know me, He said, “*Before Philip called you, when you were under the fig tree, I saw you*” (John 1:48). Nathanael was one who pictured the kingdom of God in his heart, believed the word prophesied in the Old Testament and so believed that the kingdom of God would come to this earth, and hoped for the kingdom of heaven. This word shows us that Jesus comes to this earth to seek such people—people who dream of entering the kingdom of God by believing in Jesus Christ, obtaining new life from death, and living forever in that kingdom.

Jesus did not make disciples without any reason. He saw the faith of John the Baptist, who knew Jesus best, and made him His disciple, and as John the Baptist preached the word, He made those who came to have the same faith as John the Baptist His disciples. The two disciples of John the Baptist followed Jesus and asked where He was staying, saying, Rabbi, where are You staying? Jesus said, Come and see, and took them to where He was staying. Was the place where Jesus stayed a splendid palace, or a house where common people lived? We do not know. Only, they saw where Jesus was staying and from that day became disciples who followed Jesus. It means that faith arose in their hearts.

So they, too, testify. Andrew, because he had faith, first found his own brother Simon and said, We have found the Messiah. Messiah means the Savior. When one says one has met the Messiah, the people of Israel all understand. They are still waiting for the Savior even now. Recently a war broke out in the land of Israel, and I see that through this war Israel will come to be greatly hated by many countries of the world. It is because things that no human being should do are happening. When they are hated and threatened on every side, only then will they seek the Messiah. They will cry out loudly, Messiah who was to come, why have You not come until now? We have waited for the Messiah for thousands of years. Watch. You will see them gather and cry out for the Messiah to be sent, for them to be saved.

Dear fellow believers, if we had not met the Lord through the gospel of the water and the Spirit, if we had not received the remission of sin and come to know that He is our Savior, could we tell our families, colleagues, and friends that Jesus is the Savior? We could not. Without faith we cannot preach. Only after we ourselves have met Him can we preach. We preach what we have seen and what we believe; we cannot preach an illusion. That is how Peter, too, could meet Jesus. When Andrew brought Peter, Jesus said, You are Simon the son of Jonah; you shall be called Cephas. It means a rock, so it means that he would become a man of very good faith. Jesus is different from us. Because He is God, the moment He sees a person He knows all of that person's future. It is because He is the Creator who created everything by His word.

The first disciple of Jesus was John the Baptist, the next disciples were the disciples of John the Baptist, and following after them, twelve became the disciples of Jesus. Seen with spiritual eyes, the person in this world who first recognized Jesus and first believed in Him was John the Baptist. Through the

testimony of John the Baptist, the world came to know and believe who Jesus is. Let us look back at ourselves. Through the testimony of John the Baptist, we know and believe the fact that Jesus has become our Savior. Therefore, our faith is a faith that stands firmly on the word.

That is why, when we translate these sermons into the languages of the whole world and hand them out, people receive the remission of sin and send us word. That people are born again by reading the sermons in a sermon collection made from the sermons a pastor preached is proof that the one who testified of that word has already met Jesus. It is because you and I have met Him that we are preaching this gospel. When we meet Jesus through this gospel and preach this gospel, people, too, come to meet Jesus through paper books, e-books, and audiobooks. Just as John the Baptist met Jesus and delivered the word to his disciples so that they came to know Jesus, those who believe in Jesus and are saved become those who follow Jesus. We, too, have become disciples of Jesus. Is it not truly amazing?

We must become those who establish our faith firmly on the word. It is not that we are told to believe by force; does not the word say so? *“So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God” (Romans 10:17)*. When a person who has met the Lord delivers the word, we hear it with our ears, believe it in our hearts, take hold of it, and obtain salvation. And faith grows. How thankful and blessed we have become! We must become those who give thanks to God and those who preach this truth to the whole world. I will close the message here. 

CHAPTER

2

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John Chapter 2 seen from the perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit

How can the truth revealed at the wedding feast at Cana in John 2:1–11 be told with the word of the gospel of the water and the Spirit?

John 2:1–11 records the first sign, in which Jesus turned water into wine at the wedding feast in Cana of Galilee. This sign reveals that Jesus is not merely someone who performs miracles, but God who saves sinners from sin and gives them new life.

1. The feast that ran out of wine shows the state of mankind under sin

At the wedding feast, wine had been prepared for joy, but the wine ran out even before the feast was over. This shows the fact that there is always a limit to the strength, the possessions, and the worldly pleasures that human beings have.

People try to live happily by their own strength, but unless the problem of sin is solved, they cannot obtain true life and eternal joy. The joy gained through human effort and religious acts eventually runs dry, but the joy of salvation that Jesus gives is eternal.

2. Only Jesus can solve the problem of human insufficiency

When the wine ran out, the mother of Jesus told Jesus about the problem. But Jesus is not One who works according to people's demands or fleshly relationships. Jesus is God who accomplishes the work of salvation according to the will of God the Father and at the time the Father has appointed.

The mother of Jesus said this to the servants.

"His mother said to the servants, 'Whatever He says to you, do it.'" (John 2:5).

This word shows what faith is. Faith is not putting one's own thoughts and experiences first; it is accepting the word Jesus has spoken just as it is and following it.

3. The stone waterpots for purification show the limit of human religious washing

In the house of the feast, six stone waterpots were set according to the manner of purification of the Jews. The water of purification was used for the outward rite of cleansing, in which people washed their hands and vessels. But washing the body with outward water does not remove even the sins recorded in a person's heart and conscience.

The Law and religious acts reveal the fact that a person is a sinner, but they cannot remove sin itself. What makes a sinner's heart clean is only the work of salvation that Jesus accomplished.

4. Filling the waterpots with water up to the brim is the faith that fully accepts the word of salvation

Jesus said to the servants as follows.

“Jesus said to them, ‘Fill the waterpots with water.’ And they filled them up to the brim” (John 2:7).

In the gospel of the water and the Spirit, the water that filled the waterpots signifies the word of God that causes sinners to be born again, that is, the gospel of the remission of sin that Jesus accomplished. Just as the waterpots were filled up to the brim, so the work of salvation that Jesus did must be accepted in a person’s heart without leaving anything out.

The work of salvation that Jesus did was accomplished as follows.

— God, who is the Word, put on the flesh and came to this earth to save sinners.

— With the baptism He received from John, Jesus had all the sins of the world transferred to Him.

— Bearing those sins, Jesus was hung on the Cross and shed His blood, thereby receiving the judgment of sin in the place of sinners.

— By rising from the dead, He gave new life and eternal life to those who believe.

When Jesus was baptized by John, He said, *“Thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness.”* And when John saw Jesus, he testified, *“Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!”* With the baptism He received from John, Jesus had the sin of the world transferred to Him, and bearing that sin, He went to the Cross.

Therefore, believing the gospel does not mean believing only in the Cross of Jesus separately. It means accepting in one’s heart the incarnation of Jesus, the baptism He received from

John, the blood of the Cross, and the resurrection from the dead as one complete work of salvation.

5. Water turning into good wine shows the power of salvation by which a sinner receives new life

Following the word of Jesus, the servants filled the waterpots with water, drew some out, and took it to the master of the feast. At that time the water turned into good wine.

The servants only filled the waterpots with water and drew it out and served it. The One who turned the water into wine was Jesus. In the same way, a sinner cannot change himself into a righteous person by his own efforts. The One who makes a sinner into a righteous person without sin and makes him a child of God is Jesus.

With the baptism He received from John, the blood of the Cross, and the resurrection, Jesus completely removed our sins. When a sinner believes this word of salvation with the heart, he has all his sins washed away and receives new life. This is the power of salvation revealed through the sign of water turning into good wine.

6. The good wine signifies the new life and true joy obtained through the remission of sin

The master of the feast was surprised to see that the wine that came out later was better than the wine that had come out first. What Jesus gives a sinner is not a religious life that is slightly improved compared with before. Jesus saves the old man who was under sin and gives the remission of sin, new life, and

eternal joy.

The joy of the world disappears just as the wine ran out, but the joy of salvation obtained by believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit does not disappear. This is because the fact that Jesus has removed all our sins is based on the word of God, which does not change according to circumstances or feelings.

7. The wedding feast shows the relationship between Jesus Christ and the people who have received the remission of sin

Jesus Christ is the spiritual Bridegroom of those who have received the remission of sin by believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit. Those who have had their sins washed away and received new life by believing the word of salvation that Jesus accomplished become the bride of Christ.

We were originally born as descendants of Adam and were under sin and judgment. But with the baptism He received from John, Jesus had all our sins transferred to Him, bore the price of that sin on the Cross, and rose from the dead. The person who believes this work of salvation with the heart receives the remission of sin, becomes a child of God, and becomes one of the people who belong to Jesus Christ.

8. The first sign revealed the glory of Jesus

“This beginning of signs Jesus did in Cana of Galilee, and manifested His glory; and His disciples believed in Him” (John 2:11).

The act of turning water into wine revealed that Jesus is God

who has the power of creation. At the same time, it showed the glory of the Savior who changes sinners into righteous people and dead souls into living souls.

The truth revealed at the wedding feast at Cana can be summed up as follows.

What happened at the wedding feast at Cana	The meaning revealed in the gospel of the water and the Spirit
The wine ran out	The life and joy of human beings under sin are exhausted
The stone waterpots for purification	The Law and outward religious rites cannot remove the sin of the heart
Filling the waterpots with water	Accepting in the heart the word of the remission of sin that Jesus accomplished
Filling them up to the brim	Fully believing the salvation of the incarnation, the baptism received from John, the Cross, and the resurrection
The water turned into good wine	A sinner receives the remission of sin, becomes righteous, and receives new life
The joy of the wedding feast was restored	The saved person obtains true joy in God
The glory of Jesus was revealed	It is revealed that Jesus is the Creator and the God who saves sinners

Conclusion

In the end, the sign at the wedding feast at Cana is the word that Jesus gives the life and joy that human beings do not have. A sinner cannot change himself, but when he accepts in his heart the gospel of the water and the Spirit that Jesus accomplished, he has all his sins washed away and receives new life. Jesus, who turned water into good wine, changes sinners into righteous people and makes them Christ's bride, who will take part in the eternal wedding feast of the Kingdom of God.

In John 2:14–22, Jesus carried out the ministry of cleansing the temple; how can this truth be told as the ministry of the gospel of the water and the Spirit that cleanses the sin in our hearts?

In John 2:14–22, Jesus drove out the merchants in the temple and cleansed the temple. Then, speaking of His own body as the true temple, He prophesied His death on the Cross and His resurrection.

Therefore, the center of the ministry of cleansing the temple does not lie only in His putting the building in order. It is the word of salvation that showed that Jesus would bear all the sin of mankind with the baptism He received from John, receive the judgment of those sins on the Cross, and, by rising from the dead, make the hearts of sinners clean.

1. The temple that had become a house of merchandise

The temple was the place where people offered sacrifices to

God, prayed, and received the grace of God. But when Jesus entered the temple, those who sold oxen, sheep, and doves and those who changed money had taken their places there.

Oxen, sheep, and doves were originally the sacrifices offered to God. But the religious leaders and merchants of that time, rather than serving so that people's problem of sin would be solved through the sacrifices, turned the temple into a place for gaining their own profit. Human greed, money, and false religion had come into the temple, which ought to be holy.

Jesus spoke as follows.

“He said to those who sold doves, ‘Take these things away! Do not make My Father’s house a house of merchandise!’” (John 2:16).

The sight of the temple having become a house of merchandise shows the human heart defiled by sin. People ought to live with God dwelling in them, but in their hearts greed, pride, lewdness, hatred, self-righteousness, and the desire to love the world have settled in. Even if a person outwardly believes in God and offers sacrifices, if sin remains as it is in his heart, he cannot become a clean temple in which God dwells.

2. Jesus Himself cleansed the temple

It was not that the merchants in the temple withdrew on their own. Jesus made a whip of cords, drove out the sheep and the oxen, and overturned the tables of the money changers.

In the same way, the sin in a person's heart cannot be removed by the sinner himself. Even if a person tries to make himself clean with prayers of repentance, good deeds, and the works of the Law, he cannot by himself erase even the sins recorded in his conscience. The only One who can judge sin and

completely remove it is the holy Jesus.

The ministry of cleansing the temple is not a matter of patching up sin little by little. It is the work by which Jesus, having borne all the sin of sinners in His own body and paid the price of those sins completely, makes the heart and conscience clean.

3. The body of Jesus is the true temple

The Jews demanded of Jesus a sign, asking by what authority He did these things. Then Jesus spoke as follows.

“Jesus answered and said to them, ‘Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.’ Then the Jews said, ‘It has taken forty-six years to build this temple, and will You raise it up in three days?’ But He was speaking of the temple of His body” (John 2:19–21).

The Jews were thinking of the temple in Jerusalem before their eyes, but Jesus called His own body the temple. The body of Jesus, God who put on the flesh and came to this earth, was the true temple and the perfect sacrifice to be offered for sinners.

In the temple of the Old Testament, a sinner laid his hands on the sacrifice to pass his sins on to it, and that sacrifice shed its blood in his place. But such sacrifices showed in advance the work of salvation of Jesus Christ, who was to come. Jesus became the substance of all the Old Testament sacrifices and accomplished perfect salvation once and for all.

4. Jesus bore the sin of the world with the baptism He received from John

The starting point of the work of salvation by which Jesus made the hearts of sinners clean is the baptism He received from

John. When Jesus was baptized by John, He said, *“Thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness.”*

The baptism Jesus received from John was not a meaningless, formal ceremony. Through the baptism He received from John, the representative of mankind, Jesus had all the sins of the world transferred to His own body. That is why John testified as follows, pointing to Jesus, who had been baptized.

“The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, ‘Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!’” (John 1:29).

The reason Jesus could bear the sin of the world was that He had all those sins transferred to Him with the baptism He received from John. This is the salvation of the ‘water’ spoken of in the gospel of the water and the Spirit.

5. Jesus received the judgment of sin with the blood of the Cross

With the baptism He received from John, Jesus had all the sins of mankind transferred to Him, and bearing those sins, He went to the Cross. The blood He shed on the Cross is the blood of judgment, by which He paid the price of all the sins of the world that He had borne.

At the Passover of the Old Testament, the lamb died and shed its blood, and so the judgment of death that was to fall on the people of Israel passed over them. In the same way, Jesus became the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world and received in the place of sinners the curse and judgment that they had to receive.

Because Jesus received the judgment on the Cross, no judgment of sin remains any longer for those who believe in the

gospel of the water and the Spirit. This is because the price of sin was paid completely through the sacrifice of Jesus.

“How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?” (Hebrews 9:14).

The blood of Jesus is not blood that merely comforts the feelings of those who are distressed because of sin. It is the blood by which He completely received the judgment for all the sin He had borne with the baptism He received from John. Therefore, the conscience of the person who believes this gospel is made clean from sin.

6. The words “in three days I will raise it up” mean the resurrection

The words of Jesus, *“Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up,”* point to His dying on the Cross and rising again in three days.

“Therefore, when He had risen from the dead, His disciples remembered that He had said this to them; and they believed the Scripture and the word which Jesus had said” (John 2:22).

The death of Jesus was not a failure; it was the event that completed the judgment of sin. The resurrection of Jesus testifies that His work of salvation was accomplished perfectly and that Jesus is the Lord of life.

Jesus bore sin with the baptism He received from John, received the punishment for that sin on the Cross, and rose from the dead, thereby saving sinners from sin and death. This is the gospel of the water and the Spirit that Jesus accomplished through His own body, the temple.

7. The gospel of the water and the Spirit makes our hearts the temple of God

The Holy Spirit cannot dwell in a heart that has sin. But when a person believes with the heart the work of salvation that Jesus accomplished, he has all his sins washed away and becomes righteous. At that time the Holy Spirit comes into that person's heart and is with him forever.

“Do you not know that you are the temple of God and that the Spirit of God dwells in you?” (1 Corinthians 3:16).

A person's heart becomes the temple of God not because he has lived a good life. It is because he has received the remission of sin by believing the following work of salvation that Jesus accomplished.

— Jesus, as the Son of God, put on the flesh and came to this earth.

— With the baptism He received from John, Jesus had all the sins of the world transferred to Him.

— Bearing those sins, Jesus shed His blood on the Cross and received the judgment.

— By rising from the dead, Jesus completed salvation.

— The person who believes this word with the heart has all his sins washed away and receives the Holy Spirit as a gift.

In this way, the cleansing of the temple shows the truth of salvation, that through the gospel of the water and the Spirit the heart of a sinner is made clean and becomes the temple of God in which the Holy Spirit dwells.

8. The temple that has been made clean must live a life of serving God

The purpose for which Jesus cleansed the temple was not to leave the temple empty. It was to let the temple carry out its original role again, that of praying to God, offering sacrifices, and serving God.

It is the same with the person who has received the remission of sin by believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit. The person whose heart has been washed of sin must no longer live only for the desires of the flesh and his own profit, but must live according to the Holy Spirit who dwells in his heart.

The remission of sin is not a reward we obtain by living holy lives. It is the grace we first receive by faith in the salvation Jesus completed. And because the person who has received the remission of sin has become the temple in which the Holy Spirit dwells, he serves God, preaches the gospel, and lives for the glory of God.

The ministry of cleansing the temple, together with the washing of the sin of the heart, can be summed up as follows.

The word of the cleansing of the temple	The truth revealed in the gospel of the water and the Spirit
Merchants came into the temple	Sin, greed, and self-righteousness have settled in the human heart
Outward sacrifices continued	Religious acts alone do not remove the sin of the heart
Jesus drove out the merchants	The only One who can remove sin is Jesus

The word of the cleansing of the temple	The truth revealed in the gospel of the water and the Spirit
Jesus called His own body the temple	The body of Jesus is the true temple and the perfect sacrifice
<i>“Destroy this temple”</i>	Jesus received the judgment of sin on the Cross
<i>“In three days I will raise it up”</i>	Jesus rose from the dead and completed salvation
The temple was made clean	The heart of the person who believes the gospel is made clean from sin
The function of the temple was restored	The saint who has received the Holy Spirit lives a life of serving God

Conclusion

In conclusion, Jesus’ ministry of cleansing the temple reveals the holiness of God, who hates sin. At the same time, it shows that the body of Jesus would become the true temple and that He would die and rise again for sinners.

With the baptism He received from John, Jesus had all the sins of the world transferred to Him; bearing those sins, He shed His blood on the Cross and received the judgment; and He rose from the dead. The person who believes this gospel of the water and the Spirit with the heart has all his sins washed away and becomes the temple of God in which the Holy Spirit dwells. This is the truth of salvation that cleanses the sin of the heart, revealed through the ministry of cleansing the temple. ☐

Questions and Answers on John Chapter 2

[Question] 1. Briefly summarize the entire content of John chapter 2.

John chapter 2 shows who Jesus is, centering on the events that took place at the wedding feast at Cana and in the temple in Jerusalem.

First, at the wedding feast at Cana, when the wine ran out, Mary said to the servants, *“Whatever He says to you, do it.”* When the servants filled the stone waterpots with water according to the word of Jesus and took it to the master of the feast, the water turned into good wine. This was the first sign that Jesus performed, and it revealed His glory, and the disciples came to believe in Jesus. This event shows that the joy and ability that come from human beings can run out, but that Jesus gives new life and true joy to those who believe His word and obey it.

After that, Jesus went up to Jerusalem at the Passover, and in the temple He drove out those who sold oxen, sheep, and doves and those who changed money, and said, *“Do not make My Father’s house a house of merchandise!”* This was because the temple is a house for serving God, not a place for satisfying human greed and gaining profit. When the Jews asked what sign He would show, Jesus said, *“Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.”* This temple pointed to the body of Jesus. Because Jesus had taken charge of the sin of the world with His baptism, He had to die on the Cross shedding His blood like the

Passover sacrificial lamb, and by rising again in three days, He revealed that He is the Lord of life and the Savior.

Finally, many people saw the signs Jesus did and believed in His name, but Jesus did not commit Himself to them. Jesus knew all men and what was in man, and without relying on people, He accomplished the work of salvation that God the Father had entrusted to Him. Therefore, John chapter 2 is a chapter that testifies that Jesus is the One who gives new life and true joy to human lives that are lacking, and that He is the Son of God who cleanses the temple and would accomplish perfect salvation through His baptism, the Cross, and the resurrection.

[Question] 2. In John chapter 2 verse 1, explain what kind of place Cana in the region of Galilee was.

Cana of Galilee is a village in the region of Galilee. When a wedding feast was held here, Jesus made wine from water. This was the first sign that Jesus performed; through it Jesus revealed His glory, and His disciples believed in Him.

Jesus later came to Cana again. At that time He healed by His word a nobleman's son who was sick at Capernaum, and the Bible records this as the second sign Jesus did after He had come out of Judea into Galilee. Nathanael, too, is called a man "*of Cana in Galilee.*"

Therefore, Cana of Galilee is the hometown of Nathanael, and in particular it is the place where Jesus performed His first sign and revealed His glory.

[Question] 3. In John chapter 2 verse 3, what does it mean that the wine ran out at the wedding feast?

That the wine ran out at the wedding feast means, first of all, an actual predicament in which the joy of the feast could no longer continue. But this event also contains a spiritual meaning that shows the condition of human beings. Since wine in the Bible represents joy, the shortage of wine shows that people lack true joy and satisfaction. From this lack the event began, and the work of Jesus was revealed.

People live on the pleasures they get from the things and circumstances of the world, but such joy does not last long and eventually runs dry. Even with the abilities and good deeds people have, they cannot fully satisfy their hearts or fill them with the joy of salvation. Just as the feast went on and the guests remained while the wine had run out, people want joy but are beings who cannot produce it or keep it going by themselves.

But the running out of the wine does not end simply with the meaning that the feast failed. It became the place where human lack was revealed and where the fact that Jesus is absolutely necessary came to light. Mary told Jesus about that lack, and Jesus turned the water into better wine by His word. Therefore, the running out of the wine shows the limit of the joy and satisfaction that come from human beings, and reveals the fact that true joy and the satisfaction of salvation must be given by Jesus Christ.

That true joy is given when the problem of sin is completely solved. Jesus came as the Lord of life and, by being baptized by John the Baptist in the Jordan River, received all the sins of mankind passed on to His own body. Because He bore those sins, He was hung on the Cross and received the judgment in our place, and He rose from the dead and became the eternal Savior.

When a sinner fully accepts this word of salvation in his heart, he receives the remission of sin and new life, and enjoys the joy of salvation that never runs dry.

[Question] 4. In John chapter 2 verse 4, examine why Jesus Christ called His mother Mary “Woman.”

When Jesus heard Mary say that the wine had run out, He answered as follows.

“Jesus said to her, ‘Woman, what does your concern have to do with Me? My hour has not yet come.’” (John 2:4).

Here, the word “Woman” must not be judged only by how it feels in our language today. In our language, a son calling his mother “Woman” may sound cold and rude, but at that time this expression was a respectful form of address that honored a woman. Therefore, Jesus was not despising Mary or denying His relationship with her as His mother.

This fact is revealed even more clearly when Jesus was hung on the Cross. Even then, Jesus said to Mary, “Woman, behold your son!” and to John He said, “Behold your mother!” And from that time John took Mary into his own home (John 19:26–27). Jesus took care of Mary until the moment of His death even while using the address “Woman.” Therefore, this form of address cannot be understood as a word of disrespect toward a parent or an insult.

But there is also a meaning beyond respect in Jesus’ use of this form of address. Seen according to the flesh, Jesus is the son whom Mary bore, but as the One who does the work of salvation, He is not an ordinary son who moves according to Mary’s demands. Jesus is the Creator and the Savior of Mary. Therefore,

when He performed the sign at Cana, the relationship between the two appears not as a simple relationship of mother and son, but as the relationship between the Creator and a saint who believes in and follows Him.

The words “*My hour has not yet come*” are in the same flow. Jesus is not One who works at will, led by the requests of His flesh and blood; He is God who works according to the time and the mission He appointed for saving mankind. Mary, too, did not resist this word, but said to the servants, “*Whatever He says to you, do it.*” Mary did not try to command the son she had borne in the flesh; she took her place as one who believes and follows the word of Christ.

Therefore, Jesus’ calling Mary “*Woman*” was not a word that lowered His mother. It was a respectful form of address, and at the same time it reveals the fact that in the work of salvation, fleshly blood ties cannot come before the will and authority of the Lord. Jesus was the fleshly son of Mary, but fundamentally He was the Creator and the Savior whom Mary, too, had to believe in and obey.

[Question] 5. In John chapter 2 verses 5–9, what lesson can we learn through Mary and the servants who obeyed the words of Jesus?

The attitude of Mary and the servants shows that faith is trusting Jesus Christ and actually following His word, putting it before one’s own thoughts.

When the wine ran out, Mary did not try to solve the problem in her own way, but told Jesus about the lack. And she said to the servants, “*Whatever He says to you, do it.*” Mary did not see Jesus only as the fleshly son she had borne; she believed in Him

as the Son of God and the Savior who would give people life and joy. Therefore, she did not decide on a solution and demand it, but entrusted everything to Jesus.

The obedience of the servants was also clear. Wine was needed, but Jesus told them to fill the stone waterpots with water. By human calculation, water and wine seemed to have nothing to do with each other, but the servants filled the waterpots with water up to the brim without questioning why. They also obeyed just as they were told when He said to take that water to the master of the feast. They did not alter the word by their own judgment or carry out only part of it.

This scene also teaches us what kind of faith it is that fully accepts the word of God in the heart. We must not believe only in the Cross of Jesus, detached from the rest; we must also believe why He was baptized by John the Baptist. By being baptized, Jesus received all the sins of mankind passed on to His own body. Because He bore those sins, He was judged and died on the Cross in our place, and He rose from the dead and became the eternal Savior. In this way, when a sinner fully accepts in his heart the word of the incarnation and baptism of Jesus and of His Cross and resurrection, just as the waterpots were filled with water up to the brim, he receives the remission of sin, new life, and true joy.

When the servants obeyed, the water turned into wine. The master of the feast did not know where the wine had come from, but the servants who had drawn the water knew. Those who directly believed and acted on the word of the Lord experienced His power most closely. But the power that turned the water into wine did not come from the deeds of the servants; it was in Jesus Christ. The servants obeyed the word, and the Lord accomplished the work.

Therefore, this word does not mean that we should

unconditionally follow just anyone's words. The object of faith and obedience is Jesus Christ and His word. Entrusting our lack to the Lord, not picking and choosing from His word by our own thoughts, and fully accepting the word of the salvation that the Lord has accomplished—this is the faith we can learn from Mary and the servants.

[Question] 6. In John chapter 2 verse 11, what special meaning is there in calling a miracle a “sign”?

The “sign” spoken of in the Gospel of John does not mean merely a miracle that astonishes people or a supernatural power. Its unique meaning lies in its being evidence that points to and shows, through an event appearing before people's eyes, who Jesus Christ is and what work He accomplishes for people.

The water turning into wine at the wedding feast at Cana was clearly a miracle that no human being could perform. But the purpose for which the Lord did this was not simply to boast of His amazing power or to supply the wine that was lacking at the feast. John 2:11 records, “*This beginning of signs Jesus did in Cana of Galilee, and manifested His glory; and His disciples believed in Him.*” In this word, the progression of the sign appears clearly. The purpose of the sign is not people's admiration; it is that the glory of Jesus is revealed and people come to believe in Him.

Therefore, the center of this sign is not the water or the wine, but Jesus Christ. The event of turning water into wine reveals that Jesus is not an ordinary human being but God, and that He is the Christ and the Savior sent by God. It also shows that it is Jesus Christ who saves sinners through the gospel of the water

and the Spirit, makes them children of God, and gives them life. A sign does not hold people's eyes on the visible miracle; it leads them to Jesus, who performed the miracle.

Therefore, having directly experienced a miracle does not necessarily mean having realized the meaning of the sign. The people who experienced the miracle of the five loaves and two fish ate the bread Jesus gave and were filled, but they did not fully see Jesus, to whom the sign pointed. Jesus said to them, *"You seek Me, not because you saw the signs, but because you ate of the loaves and were filled."* They gained the benefit of the miracle, but through that miracle they did not realize who it was they had to believe in. The person who sees a sign rightly does not seek only the benefit of the flesh; he believes in Jesus Christ, whom God sent, and seeks the food of eternal life that He gives.

The last part of the Gospel of John states the purpose of recording the signs as follows. *"And truly Jesus did many other signs in the presence of His disciples, which are not written in this book; 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 20:30–31).

In the end, a sign is not merely an object of wonder; it is evidence that reveals the glory and identity of Jesus. The conclusion to which a sign points is always to believe that Jesus is the Son of God and the Christ, and to receive the remission of sin and obtain life through the gospel of the water and the Spirit that He accomplished. Therefore, the right response to a sign is not to chase after the miracle itself, but to believe in Jesus Christ, to whom the sign points.

[Question] 7. In John chapter 2 verses 14–16, how did it come about that oxen, sheep, and doves were bought and sold inside the temple?

The selling of oxen, sheep, and doves in the temple originally began in connection with the sacrifices offered to God. God had the people of Israel offer an ox or a sheep from among their livestock as an offering when they offered sacrifices. In particular, the burnt offering had to be “*a male without blemish*,” and the person who brought the offering had to lay his hand on its head and then hand it over to the priest to have the sacrifice offered. Therefore, the people who went up to Jerusalem to keep the Passover needed sacrifices to offer to God.

A worshiper had to bring an acceptable, unblemished offering in accordance with the Law. But at the Passover, people who lived scattered in various regions came up to Jerusalem, so it was not easy to bring an ox or a sheep along the long road. On the grounds of relieving this inconvenience and making it easier to offer sacrifices, a market for buying and selling sacrificial animals came to be opened near the temple. There people bought and sold oxen, sheep, and doves, or even bartered them. The trade that began in this way finally came into the temple itself, and the money changers also took their places along with it.

But what had begun for convenience gradually degenerated into a business for profit. Although an unblemished offering had to be offered to God, the merchants brought in even animals that had blemishes and could not properly be offered as sacrifices, and sold them at full price. Furthermore, the merchants colluded with the priests, so that even the blemished animals they sold would be accepted as sacrifices, and they shared the profit that came from this. The people came to buy sacrifices in order to receive the remission of their sins, but the merchants and the

priests made those sacrifices a means of gaining their own fleshly profit.

Because of this, the temple could no longer keep its appearance as a holy place where people prayed to God and offered sacrifices; it turned into something like a market filled with the cries of animals and the sounds of buying and selling. It became possible to sell oxen, sheep, and doves inside the temple not simply because a few merchants sneaked in, but because trade carried on under the pretext of the people's convenience became a custom, and even the priests took part in that trade or turned a blind eye to it.

When Jesus saw such a sight, this is what He did: *"When He had made a whip of cords, He drove them all out of the temple, with the sheep and the oxen, and poured out the changers' money and overturned the tables. And He said to those who sold doves, 'Take these things away! Do not make My Father's house a house of merchandise!'"* What the Lord rebuked was not the sacrifices themselves. He rebuked their using the sacrifices and the temple that God had established to make money, and their turning the work of serving God into a business for satisfying human greed.

The temple was originally meant to be *"a house of prayer for all nations."* But they made that house a place for gaining their own profit. This is also why the parallel passage in Matthew calls it *"a den of thieves."* It is because, under the pretext of the sacrifices offered to God, they exploited people's faith and their offerings. Therefore, this event shows the fact that when human greed and material profit enter into the work of serving God, even the holy sacrifices can degenerate into a business.

[Question] 8. In John chapter 2 verses 14 and 15, explain the reason and the process by which money changers came to be in the temple.

In the Old Testament age, when God had the people of Israel numbered, He had everyone twenty years old and above give half a shekel according to the shekel of the sanctuary. It was ransom money for redeeming their lives, and it was used for the service of the tabernacle of meeting. The rich were not to give more and the poor were not to give less; everyone had to give the same half shekel.

In the New Testament age, too, people gathered at the temple in Jerusalem to keep the Passover, and in the temple sat those who changed money. When we put the background in Exodus and the record of the Gospel of John together, we can confirm this much: there was a fixed amount of money to be prepared in connection with the temple worship, and those who handled it took their places inside the temple. However, it is difficult to say specifically which currency people exchanged for which, whether only a particular currency was accepted in the temple, or how much commission was charged.

The problem lay not so much in the changing of money itself as in the fact that this work had come into the temple, become a business, and degenerated into a work of seeking human profit. The temple, where people ought to worship God, was being turned into a place for making money. Therefore, Jesus *“poured out the changers’ money and overturned the tables”* and cleansed the temple. Then He rebuked them, saying, *“Do not make My Father’s house a house of merchandise!”*

In the end, the money changers had taken their places on the pretext of handling the monetary needs connected with temple worship, but that degenerated into a business and a matter of

satisfying the desires of the flesh. Jesus did not tolerate human greed and profit entering into the work of serving God and thereby defiling the temple.

[Question] 9. In John chapter 2 verses 19–22, interpret the words Jesus spoke, “*Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.*”

When Jesus drove out the merchants in the temple, the Jews demanded that He show them a sign showing by what authority He did these things. To this Jesus answered, “*Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.*”

The Jews understood His words as referring to the Jerusalem temple, which had been under construction for forty-six years. So they retorted, asking how a man could rebuild that temple in three days. But the text clearly reveals its meaning, saying, “*He was speaking of the temple of His body.*”

Therefore, the words “*Destroy this temple*” do not mean to tear down the physical temple; they point to the Jews’ nailing the body of Jesus to the cross and killing Him. The words “*in three days I will raise it up*” point to Jesus’ rising again in three days after He died. In other words, it is a prophecy of His death and resurrection: “You will kill Me, but I will rise again in three days.”

Jesus became the true sacrifice of the Passover, and bearing the sin of the world that He had taken charge of with His baptism, He died on the Cross. But everything did not end with that death; by rising again from the dead, He revealed that He is the Son of God and the Christ. The resurrection of Jesus was a sign that showed the fact that He is the Lord of life and God who overcomes death.

Even when Jesus was hung on the Cross, people mocked Him, saying, “*You who destroy the temple and build it in three days.*” They still did not understand the word of Jesus, but through the very act of their killing Jesus, the words “*Destroy this temple*” were fulfilled. Then, as Jesus actually rose again in three days and appeared to His disciples, the words “*in three days I will raise it up*” were also fulfilled just as He had spoken them.

The disciples, too, did not understand the meaning of this word at first. But only after Jesus had risen from the dead did they remember this word and believe the Scripture and the word Jesus had spoken. Therefore, this word is a word that revealed in advance that the body of Jesus would be killed and would rise again in three days, and it is the word of a sign that leads people to believe in His death and resurrection.

[Question] 10. In John chapter 2 verses 23–25, why did Christ not commit Himself even to those who believed after seeing the signs?

At the Passover, many people saw the signs Jesus did and believed in His name. But Jesus did not look only at their outwardly shown faith and response. Because “*He knew all men*” and “*He knew what was in man*,” Jesus did not commit Himself to them.

The text does not say that those people did not believe at all. It only states that what led them to believe in Jesus was the signs Jesus had performed. When an amazing thing appears before their eyes, people may seem to believe in and follow Jesus. But a person who followed because of signs and the benefit of the flesh may turn away when he hears a word different from what

he expected. The people who followed Jesus after seeing the miracle of the five loaves and two fish also wanted the bread of the flesh, but when Jesus preached the word of life, many of them went back.

Therefore, a person's whole heart cannot be judged only by the cheers or the confession of faith shown after seeing a sign. Jesus knew who believed the word, who sought the benefit of the flesh, and even who would eventually leave Him or sell Him out. He had no need to hear anyone's testimony in order to judge a person's identity and heart. This is because people can see only outward words and actions, but Jesus is God, who knows even the motives and the heart within a person.

That Jesus did not commit Himself to them does not mean that He did not love those people or that He did not give them salvation. It means that He did not entrust Himself to people's popularity and support, nor did He do the work of God by relying on people. Jesus did not move according to people's praise or recognition; He relied on God the Father and accomplished the work of salvation that the Father had entrusted to Him.

Therefore, true faith in Jesus must not be a faith that stays with visible signs or immediate benefits, but a faith that believes with the heart the word Jesus spoke and the work He did to save us. Because Jesus knows not merely people's outward appearance but even the inside of their hearts, He did not rely on outward confessions alone, but judged according to a person's heart. ☒

Sermon 1 by Paul C. Jong

Believe the word given to the Church and experience the work of God

< John 2:1-11 >

“On the third day there was a wedding in Cana of Galilee, and the mother of Jesus was there. Now both Jesus and His disciples were invited to the wedding. And when they ran out of wine, the mother of Jesus said to Him, ‘They have no wine.’ Jesus said to her, ‘Woman, what does your concern have to do with Me? My hour has not yet come.’ His mother said to the servants, ‘Whatever He says to you, do it.’ Now there were set there six waterpots of stone, according to the manner of purification of the Jews, containing twenty or thirty gallons apiece. Jesus said to them, ‘Fill the waterpots with water.’ And they filled them up to the brim. And He said to them, ‘Draw some out now, and take it to the master of the feast.’ And they took it. When the master of the feast had tasted the water that was made wine, and did not know where it came from (but the servants who had drawn the water knew), the master of the feast called the bridegroom. And he said to him, ‘Every man at the beginning sets out the good wine, and when the guests have well drunk, then the inferior. You have kept the good wine until now!’ This beginning of signs Jesus did in Cana of Galilee, and

manifested His glory; and His disciples believed in Him.”

When is the time that God works?

I am continuing from the message of this afternoon. When is the time that the Lord works in you and me? The Lord works when we believe the word of the Lord, and when we believe the word He speaks through the servants of God. No matter how much you read the Bible by yourself, saying that you will live the life of faith alone, it is of no use. God works through the Church. And He absolutely does not work apart from the word of God. That is why there is a time for the sermon and a time for worship, and this is why you and I must worship several times even in one week. If we do not hear the word of God, if we do not unite with the work God wants to do through the Church of God and the servants of God, and if we do not believe with the heart, we cannot do the work of God. When we believe the word of God and believe the word that the servants of God preach, God works in the hearts of you and me and accomplishes His will.

The Lord spoke in verses 4 and 5 of today's passage. *“Jesus said to her, ‘Woman, what does your concern have to do with Me? My hour has not yet come.’ His mother said to the servants, ‘Whatever He says to you, do it.’”* It is the word, *“Whatever He says to you, do it.”* We must believe that the word God speaks comes true just as it is.

“Whatever He says to you, do it”

The word rapture means to lift up. It means that when the

time comes, the Lord will lift His people up into the air, into His Kingdom. Does it make sense when you think of it according to the flesh? How can He lift up this heavy body, all these many people? What if someone falls while being lifted up? It does not make sense when you think according to the flesh. But the Lord took Enoch, and He took Elijah as well. Since He said that in these last days He will rapture us, that He will take us, we must believe that word. If we believe that word, it happens according to the word. Of course, those who have received the remission of sin take part in it because they have been united with the Lord. But it is the same with all the other words as well. We must believe the word of the Lord, and when the servants of God preach that word, we must believe that it is the word the Lord speaks and follow it. When we do so, the Lord works in you and me. The Lord does not usually work through an individual. That is why people who work alone very often fail. Most of them fail.

Since the Lord has spoken, it will surely come to pass

When I first met the Lord through the word, I realized, “Ah, so this is that word.” But then a very heavy burden pressed down on my mind. I agonized over the fact that Christianity throughout the whole world did not have this truth and did not preach this gospel of the water and the Spirit. At that time, the first word the Lord spoke to me as soon as I was born again was to go to the end of the earth and be a witness of this gospel. I believed that since the Lord had spoken, it would come to pass just as He said. I believed, saying, “Lord, I will preach the gospel to the whole world.” It was not that I believed by myself; I believed the word of God. The Lord said to make disciples of all the nations,

baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to observe all things that He had commanded. It is the word telling us to preach the gospel of the water and the Spirit to the whole world, and to keep and spread the faith that believes in this gospel.

Judging by circumstances, what could I do alone? It made no sense. One might well say, “How dare you dream such a dream?” But since the Lord has spoken, we believe it; and believing that it will surely come to pass, we do just as He said. That only a few of us gathered to worship was a matter of circumstances, and I believed that if God had spoken, it would be done as He said. Hasn’t it actually come to pass today, just as the word said? Was it done because I did well? Was it done because you did well? Since the Lord wanted it and said He would do it, and we believed, the Lord worked in us and it was accomplished. Someone might say, “Aren’t you out of your mind? How is that possible?” But circumstances are circumstances, and if God has spoken, it is done as He said. Some people think it is extremely difficult, but I believe that it is only natural for the gospel to be spread throughout the world, and only natural for the gospel of the water and the Spirit to be spread by people. It is the same with the time when God works in you. When you believe the word of God, when you believe that the things the Church of God does for the spread of the gospel are the will of God and believe that they will surely come to pass, God does the work of blessing in you and in me. If we do not believe the word of God and the work that God’s workers do, we cannot experience the work of God’s blessing.

When we believe the word of God, we receive the remission of sin and blessings as well

For example, when we preach the gospel of the water and the Spirit, we first talk about people's sin. We start from the fact that a person is born as a lump of sin from birth. Let us look at Mark 7:21–23. *“For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lewdness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness. All these evil things come from within and defile a man.”* The word of God teaches that because people are evil by nature, they think evil thoughts, and because they think evil thoughts, they come to do evil deeds. When God speaks like this, we must believe that word. The one who preaches the word also preaches that, since such evil thoughts are always in the hearts of all of us, we are lumps of sin who must be judged, and so we must be saved.

At that time, those who hear must listen to the word of God and to the words of the one who preaches it, and believe, “We really are such beings, but the Lord has removed all our sins.” When they believe the gospel of the water and the Spirit just as it is—that Jesus bore all our sins with the baptism He received from John, died on the Cross receiving the judgment of those sins, and rose from the dead to become our Savior—God works in the hearts of the hearers, and they experience Him washing the sins of their hearts clean as white as snow. They come to taste the work of God. Please remember these words, “Taste the work of God.” But if the one who hears the word receives it with an attitude of “Well, let's hear what you have to say,” and does not believe that since the word of God is the truth it will surely come to pass as it says, then no matter how true the word is, that word of blessing does not become his own. It does not happen

because he does not believe. To taste the blessing of God, we must believe the word of God and believe the words of the servants of God.

Dear fellow believers, do you believe the word of God? Do you believe that the word of God is the truth? Do you believe that it surely comes to pass just as it says? The word surely comes to pass just as it says. Only a few years ago, when economists said that the world economy would become this difficult, people regarded it as just one hypothesis and did not believe it. But those who believe the word of God, from the time they met the Lord, because they believe the word of God, have done the work of God together, speaking as though they had seen with their own eyes that this world can never last long. I did it because I believed, and because I believed, I spoke to you in faith. Those who believe the word of God know that it is only natural for such a world as this to come now. When the world is in turmoil, we must not sit down in despair; we must still keep preaching the gospel, and we believe that when we preach this gospel, the Lord keeps us and blesses us. It is because of this faith that we come to unite together. When we believe the word of God, we receive the remission of sin and blessings as well.

When you hear the word, it is important to believe the word with the heart

After I met the Lord, my greatest worry was what I would eat and what I would drink. Until then I had only studied a little; I had never done anything to earn money. So what I thought up was selling pots. In the old days, at the entrance of the marketplace there was a vendor who spread out big and small pots, pans, dishes, and spoons all along a long cart and sold them.

That vendor did business for only two or three hours in the evening and then packed up. I thought that I would take care of making a living by doing business for only two or three hours a day, and devote all the rest of the time to the work of God. So I went up beside that man and asked, “Sir, I would like to do this business too, so please teach me. Where do you get your goods, and how much capital does it take?” I was really naive then, so when he would not teach me, the next day I got two cups of coffee from a vending machine, put one in his hand, and asked again, “Did business go well today? How much do you make on one of these?” The man got angry. “Would you teach it if you were in my shoes? This is my livelihood.” I did not give in either, and said, “I am not saying I will do business right next to you; I am saying I will go far away and do it. Don’t we all have to make a living together? If I don’t do this business, won’t somebody else?” The man lost his temper and said that those customers were his customers, and that if I went far away and did it, wouldn’t that be taking his customers away? When I said that if he kept refusing to teach me, I would learn this business and set up right next to him, he got angry and said fine, set it up, and let’s just see. I had tried to learn from him, but in the end we even raised our voices and quarreled, and that man never taught me to the end. Then again, even if he had taught me, I had no capital.

While I was making such plans, I began to preach the gospel, and in the old days I preached the gospel far more than you do. I preached to two or three people a day, and many received the remission of sin. If I went out and preached the gospel on Monday, on Wednesday about two new people would be sitting there. When I preached the word and went down and had fellowship, those people would in turn preach the gospel to their families, and if I preached from Thursday, on Friday another

new person would be there. On Saturday, too, I always ended up preaching to at least one person, and when Sunday came, sometimes three or four people who had received the remission of sin in one week would come and be sitting there. How exciting that was! Words came out of this mouth without stopping, as if it had a motor attached. Because I had so much to say, I preached the word for two and a half hours at a time, then went down and held on to those who were not yet clear and had fellowship for another two hours, and after the evening service we had gospel fellowship until one or two in the morning before parting. But when I tried it like that day and night, there was a limit to my strength. I came to the conclusion that with this method it would be hard to preach the gospel to the world, and that I could not even finish preaching to our own neighborhood. So I thought that I should record the messages I preached and collect them, and that is how I came to do the literature ministry, and how I have met you and am doing this work today.

Dear fellow believers, when you hear the word, all those who believe that this word is the word of God and that what is preached is also the word of God receive the remission of sin. And they receive blessings as well. The Bible is this thick, and I chew each verse of it into small pieces and deliver it to you. I believe that word, and I deliver to you what I believe. Then, as you encounter this word, you come to be able to believe it, and you come to believe that the word I deliver is also the word of God and a word that surely comes to pass. So when you listen to a sermon, it is important to believe the word with the heart. If you believe, the word becomes your own flesh and blood and comes to you as a great blessing to your body, your soul, and your thoughts.

If you try to hold on to this word and follow it by yourselves, it is hard. Perhaps it is even impossible. It is never easy. But God

speaks the word. When I read this word, though He does not speak as a friend speaks beside me, He speaks in my heart. So the word comes to be believed in my heart, and I tell you the word that has come to be believed in that way. When you look at the word of God, do you also hear God speaking? It seems some of you do, and some of you do not yet. What happens if you do not believe? It is nothing. It is no different from having listened to a speech by a politician of the world. There are people in the world who put themselves in the same place as Jesus and speak, but that is not right. I speak to you because I believe the word of God, and I believe that I am not preaching myself but the word of God. If those who hear this word believe it, they are believing the word of God, so God works in you and makes you walk with Him as Enoch did. Isn't it a wonderful thing?

“The servants who had drawn the water knew”

Mary said to the servants, *“Whatever He says to you, do it.”* This means that Mary believed the word Jesus spoke. Mary was a person like us, not a special person. She was exactly the same as we who have received the remission of sin. Mary conceived, bore, and raised the baby Jesus through the word, and she believed that all the words Jesus spoke while He lived were the word of God. At times she made mistakes, too. There were times when she thought of Jesus only as her own child, but the Lord often made her realize otherwise. When He said, “Did you not know that I had to be in My Father’s house?” Mary had nothing to say. When Jesus was about twelve years old and discussed with the teachers of the Law, those who heard were astonished, saying, “Isn’t that boy the carpenter’s son? From whom did He learn?” The Apostle Paul was a man who had studied under

Gamaliel—at what in today’s terms would be the highest institution of learning—but Jesus, though He had never studied, made the great scholars shut their mouths before Him. Because Mary had seen many such things, she knew that although Jesus had put on a human body, He was God, the Son of God the Father, and the Savior of mankind. She also knew that because Jesus had been baptized, He would be hung on the Cross.

Therefore, you too must not let your hearts slacken; when you hear the word, you must look at the word of God and believe it, and believe with the heart the word you hear. The Bible is recorded so concisely and intensely that if all the words the Lord spoke and the miracles He performed after He came were recorded one by one, even this world would not be enough to hold the books that would be written. That is why it must be explained for you to understand. If all this word were unfolded and written out in books, this earth could not hold up all those books. Hearing the same gospel, some receive the blessing of God by believing it in their hearts, while others, because they do not believe, go home with nothing but a troubled heart.

The life of faith is not achieved by reading the Bible five hours a day by oneself, praying two hours at dawn, and holding all-night prayer without sleeping. For me, too, it is not that things work out just because I look at the Bible all day long; rather, even if I look at the word only a little, I believe that word, obey what I believe, and put the work of God into action. When I do so, faith piles up in my heart bit by bit. If you only know and sit still, not doing the work of God, faith does not work. It is when we actually do the work of God that we experience the blessing God gives us. That is why I am truly happy. I do not think of preaching the word as something difficult; I have what I have preached written down, translate it with the context adjusted, and give it to people. Then what happens? Not everyone receives the

blessing, but in the hearts of many people the word comes to be believed, just as the word came to be believed in my heart. It is a wonderful thing.

No matter how long you have lived the life of faith, when you read the word and believe that it is the word of God, and when the servants of God preach and you believe that it is the word of God, the Holy Spirit works in you. You receive that kind of blessing. That you have come this far by faith is also because the word of God came to be believed in your hearts and you have come this far by the power of that faith. From now on, too, you must go on with that faith.

Since it said, *“Whatever He says to you, do it,”* the servants poured water into the waterpots according to the word telling them to fill them. Inwardly they probably thought that since so many guests had come, He must be telling them to pour the water in order to at least wash the guests’ feet. They filled the six big stone waterpots up to the brim. It says, *“And He said to them, ‘Draw some out now, and take it to the master of the feast.’ And they took it” (John 2:8).* Then the master of the feast called the bridegroom and said, *“Every man at the beginning sets out the good wine, and when the guests have well drunk, then the inferior. You have kept the good wine until now!” (John 2:10).* It says that the master of the feast tasted the water that was made wine and did not know where it came from, but the servants who had drawn the water knew. Why did the servants know? Because they believed the word telling them to do whatever He said, and tried doing as they were told. The servants, too, drew some out and tasted it themselves. They confirmed with their own mouths that the water had become wine. They came to know that when they did as they were told, the water became wine. Through this event the gospel was delivered to the servants. The servants believed in Jesus, and the disciples, too, believed, saying, “He

really is the Son of God!” Where in the world is there anyone who has made wine out of water? What magician could have made it? If you hypnotize people, it may look that way, but this was real wine.

Therefore, we must know that believing when we look at and hear the word of God and listen to the sermon is a good opportunity to experience the blessing of God and God working in you. We, too, must believe that Jesus is God, that all the words Jesus spoke are the word of God, and that all the sermons and all the work of the servants of God who believe and preach that word are the work of God and the word of God. I want you to become those who believe, and to taste God working and receive blessings. I will close the message here. ✉

Sermon 2 by Paul C. Jong

Learn true faith through those who have gone ahead

< John 2:1-11 >

“On the third day there was a wedding in Cana of Galilee, and the mother of Jesus was there. Now both Jesus and His disciples were invited to the wedding. And when they ran out of wine, the mother of Jesus said to Him, ‘They have no wine.’ Jesus said to her, ‘Woman, what does your concern have to do with Me? My hour has not yet come.’ His mother said to the servants, ‘Whatever He says to you, do it.’ Now there were set there six waterpots of stone, according to the manner of purification of the Jews, containing twenty or thirty gallons apiece. Jesus said to them, ‘Fill the waterpots with water.’ And they filled them up to the brim. And He said to them, ‘Draw some out now, and take it to the master of the feast.’ And they took it. When the master of the feast had tasted the water that was made wine, and did not know where it came from (but the servants who had drawn the water knew), the master of the feast called the bridegroom. And he said to him, ‘Every man at the beginning sets out the good wine, and when the guests have well drunk, then the inferior. You have kept the good wine until now!’ This beginning of signs Jesus did in Cana of Galilee, and manifested His glory; and His disciples believed in Him.”

In the Kingdom of God, what comes later is better than the beginning

Today I would like to speak about the Kingdom of the Lord, where what comes later is better than the beginning. Usually, for people, the beginning is good and later things grow stale. It is mainly so with the things of the flesh. Whether it is possessions, honor, health, or love, in all the things of the world what comes later is more stale than the beginning. But in the Kingdom of God, what comes later is better than the beginning. We must know that this is the blessing God has bestowed on the Church.

When we first meet the Lord, it is good. When we believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit—that Jesus bore our sins with the baptism He received from John, died on the Cross, and rose again—and receive the remission of sin and are delivered from the oppression of sin, it is so good. Some people say it is so good that they cannot contain it, and it feels as if their feet do not touch the ground. Their emotions swing that much, so that then one day they say it feels as if they are sinking into the ground. But what the Lord shows us through the wedding feast at Cana in Galilee is the fact that within the Kingdom of God, within the Church of God, what comes later is better than the beginning.

It is the same with our life of faith. At first it is hard, and we have only received the remission of sin while our worries are even greater. We worry about how to live and what to eat. Why is that? Because once we meet the Lord and receive the remission of sin, the flow of our life changes. If we lived as we did in the world, we could just go forward along that flow according to the career we had built up until then, but as soon as we receive the remission of sin, that flow is broken. Now the Lord comes first, worship comes first, and the fellowship of the

Church comes first, so a great deal has changed. So the beginning is really good, but later it becomes hard. We fall into worries such as, “Should I leave or not? Can I really live like this?” And then there are some who leave for good midway, and some who rest for a while.

After we receive the remission of sin, the Lord gives us work

But what is clear is that in the Kingdom of the Lord, what comes later is better than the beginning. Why is it better? The Lord gives us the work of God. After we receive the remission of sin, when we wander and our hearts are unsettled, He gives us the work of the Lord. Even though that work is hard, as we carry it on we gain a sense of accomplishment, and as we do the work of the Lord we gain self-respect. He gives us the satisfaction of thinking, “I have become someone who does such precious work; I have become someone used in the work of God; I have become someone entrusted with precious work in the Church of God.”

Also, while doing the work of God, we come to taste the blessing of God. We come to see prayers that we had only heard about and only spoken in words come true in reality. As the years go by, we also go through hardships and are broken a great deal. We are broken as we are disciplined. There is a time when the things we used to do according to our own thoughts, by the wisdom of the flesh, have to be broken. Once we have walked through that process, we come to act within order by a faith that believes purely, and as we experience the work of the Lord being accomplished, we receive the blessing of God again. As the days go by, we come to be used in more precious work, and things get

better as we see and experience the will of God and the work of God being accomplished more and more in the Church.

Faith also grows along with this. At first we were glad that things went well for us, but later we come to be glad that things go well for others. Our hearts come to rejoice as souls that had not been saved are saved and as the flock grows. As we live along that road, before we know it the grace of the Lord, as in the word of Ezekiel, rises from the ankles to the knees, and from the knees to the chest, and later reaches the point where one cannot help but swim. After that, we no longer worry about our own lives but worry about the work of the Lord, and we walk with the Lord and live in the blessing of the Lord until we meet the Lord. In the end we receive the Kingdom of the Lord as a gift. This is the word that on this blessed road, what comes later is better than the beginning.

What happened at the wedding feast at Cana in Galilee

There was a wedding at Cana in Galilee, and Jesus, His disciples, and the mother of Jesus went there. Not long after they went and were served food, it turned out there was no wine. Having no wine was like having no food at a house of feasting, so how flustered the wedding household must have been! The banquet had to go on for several days, yet it ran out within the first few hours. The person in charge of the feast probably came before Mary and grumbled in a worried voice, saying that they had not expected so many guests to come—they had thought at most about 200 would come, but more than 500 had come. Hearing that, Mary told Jesus that they had no wine. Jesus said, *“Woman, what does your concern have to do with Me? My hour*

has not yet come” (John 2:4). It means that it was not yet the time for Him to step forward.

Then Mary said to the servants, “*Whatever He says to you, do it.*” The servants brought water and filled the six stone waterpots full, and when He told them to draw some out now and take it, they drew it out and took it. Then the people tasted it and were so pleased, saying, “Excellent, excellent!” It was far tastier and finer than the first wine. Usually at a house of feasting the good wine comes out first and later the wine mixed with water comes out, so they praised this house, asking how it had kept the good wine until now.

Mary believed and put it into action

Here we see through what process Jesus works. When Mary was still a virgin, she heard what the angel who appeared said, and she said, “*Behold the maidservant of the Lord! Let it be to me according to your word*” (Luke 1:38). It was a confession that if God said He would do that work through her by His word, she believed it would come to pass just as He said. But when the baby was conceived in her womb and her belly grew bigger and bigger, Mary lived in hiding. Because the Jews stoned to death a betrothed woman to whom such a thing happened, if the news reached the man she was betrothed to, she was in a position where she might be stoned to death. For Mary, too, the beginning was really hard. But God accomplished the work and brought it to a good conclusion, and Mary knew. She knew the fact that although He was the son she had borne, He was absolutely not a son born through a relationship between a man and a woman, and she also knew that the name Jesus means Savior. That name was given by the angel. The angel told Mary, *You will bring*

forth a Son, and shall call His name Jesus' (Luke 1:31), and to Joseph he revealed the meaning of that name: 'for He will save His people from their sins' (Matthew 1:21). According to that word, Jesus was baptized by John and bore the sins of His people, died on the Cross receiving the judgment of those sins, rose again, and saved His people from their sins.

So when it was said that there was no wine at the wedding feast at Cana in Galilee, Mary exercised her faith. Bring water and pour it into the waterpots—they filled them full. Now draw some out and take it—they drew it out and took it. Plain water became wine. Jesus worked when Mary believed and put it into action. There is something this event shows us. It shows that for the lives of you and me within the Church of God to taste a blessing better than the beginning, faith is needed. It shows that the faith of those who have gone ahead is needed, and that those who follow the faith of those who have gone ahead come to taste that blessing.

Only when your self is broken do you taste the blessing

Dear fellow believers, do you have faith right away after being born again? Even after being born again, you still have nothing but human means and methods. A person whose human means and methods have not come to an end continues to fail to taste the blessing of God. As long as you keep using your own shallow tricks, you can never taste the blessing of God. After all those tricks have been broken, you must surrender to the Lord and raise your hands, saying, “Ah, it cannot be done by my effort; it cannot be done by my tricks.” When you rely on the Lord, pray, and ask for help, saying, “Lord, now I can do nothing, so please

help me; I believe You will help me,” and when you believe, you come to experience the Lord helping you.

Even after receiving the remission of sin, there are people who bring their human tricks even into the Church and keep using them. A person for whom that period is prolonged does not taste the blessing, and his faith does not grow. Even as the years go by, it never grows. It has been a long time since he was saved, but his faith has not grown, and he keeps colliding with people just as before. People collide with people every day, fight, and wound one another. It is because their self has not been broken. It is because they have not surrendered to the Lord. You must surrender quickly. Then you come to experience the blessing.

He told them to pour water into the six stone waterpots up to the brim. When they were filled up to the brim, what trick could be played there? Could someone have secretly poured in concentrated wine? In such big waterpots, even if you poured in a third of concentrate, if the rest was water, the wine would be watery. These six stone waterpots refer to the flesh of you and me. When we fill the hearts of you and me full of the word of God, hold on to that word and believe it, and pray and wait, we taste this kind of blessing. The miracle at Cana shows exactly this truth.

We learn through the faith of those who have gone ahead

That is why what those who have gone ahead say is extremely important. There are people who think, “Your faith is yours and my faith is mine,” but you cannot taste the blessing of God except through those who have gone ahead. Nothing works.

Why did God use Mary? God could have appeared in person and said, “I am God; if you believe in Me, I will take care of your sins and save you.” Yet why did He use Mary? We must fix our eyes on this point. It was to pass on that faith through Mary, through the faith of Mary, to those who came after her, to the disciples of Jesus. In a sense, when the miracle at the wedding feast in Galilee took place, the faith of Mary was far better than that of the twelve disciples of Jesus.

After all the wine had been served out, fill the empty waterpots with water up to the brim; fill all six; when they are all filled, draw some out and take it. The servants did as Mary commanded, and the people tasted the wine, said it was good, and praised the host. But who is it that knows? The servants who drew it out and took it know. Those who have experienced it know. Those who have united with the work of God by faith and tried doing as they were told know how the blessing of God came. The wine has run out, yet what is this about pouring water into the waterpots? To wash the waterpots, there was no need to fill them; pouring once and giving them a first rinse and then pouring two or three more ladles to wash them would have been enough, but the servants did as they were told. Doing as you are told—that is faith. Doing as you are told even though you cannot understand is also faith, and saying, “I will watch how the one who has gone ahead does it; God will surely accomplish His will through this work,” is also faith. It is great faith.

We must learn faith. Real faith comes from experience. By faith in God, by faith in the word of God, the experience of that faith—“God did this for me in the past”—gives birth to faith again, and faith gives birth to faith. If you have not built up experiences of faith directly, one to one with God, you obtain faith by seeing the faith of those who have gone ahead and uniting with it. So later you become like people of faith. This is

why God has allowed the Church and allowed those who have gone ahead. At times you may hate the one who has gone ahead and wish that person were not there, because he puts the brakes on everything you do and says unpleasant things, until you do not even want to see his face. Even so, you can experience the blessing of God only when there are those who have gone ahead, and that is why they are to be thanked.

After we meet the Lord, if we follow the Lord by faith, and, even though it is hard, abandon human means and methods, rely on the Lord, and follow in union with the Church, then what comes later becomes better than the joy of when we first met the Lord, better than the joy of the assurance of salvation that we enjoy for a while. When we were first saved, was there anything besides the fact that our sins had disappeared and that we had become children of God? We must learn true faith. We learn faith when we are in the Church, listen carefully to what those who have gone ahead say, watch their conduct carefully, and unite our hearts with them as we live together. Faith does not simply spring up. True education lies in life. Faith does not grow just because someone teaches by writing and explains well in theory. It is like this: no matter how well you do in school, you have only done well in your studies; true education must take place in the home. Whether a person grew up in a proper home decides what kind of person he becomes; merely acquiring knowledge has nothing to do with the education of character.

So we must learn through those who have gone ahead. When you look at those who have gone ahead, there is a spiritual side and a fleshly side. But if you see only the outer man and fail to see the inner man, you cannot learn true faith. When you meet a born-again person, you meet two persons in one. At first, as you encounter the voice, the eyes, the face, and the gestures, you feel that this person looks really rough on the outside. Someone like

me hears that kind of thing. People regard me as a blunt and rough person, but when you actually come face to face with the heart, you can meet what is inside. If you can feel what is in that person's heart, then that person's outer man has been broken.

But even a righteous person whose outer man has not been broken has a barrier when you meet and talk with him. There is a hardened strength. The shell of the flesh has not been broken. From such a person, nothing spiritual flows out. Faith does not flow out, he cannot pass faith on, and blessing cannot flow out. There is only strength. When you come face to face with a person, you can tell whether that person is broken or not, whether he has surrendered to the Lord or not. You can also recognize a person whose words seem rough but whose inside is not so. A person who has surrendered to the Lord and given up his own wisdom and petty tricks, a broken person, relies on the Lord a great deal. When one relies on the Lord a great deal, a great deal of faith springs up. When you deal with such a person, faith is passed on, you can meet that inner man, and through that inner man you can hear the voice of the Lord and know the will of the Lord. Those who have such a person as the servant who has gone ahead of them are happy. But with a person who claims to have gone ahead yet has not been broken, it is hard. When the inner man does not flow out, how can he be a channel of blessing? There is only the strength of the outer man.

Look at a person like Mary. Isn't Mary the fleshly mother of Jesus? If she was the mother of Jesus, whom so many people followed, wasn't she in a position to walk around with her shoulders squared before people? But look at what Mary says. She told her own son that they had no wine, and even after hearing His firm word that His hour had not yet come, there is absolutely nothing of her asserting her authority, as if to say, "I am His mother, after all." She honors Jesus as her Master, as her

God, as her Savior. Since He said it was not His hour, she thought, “Ah, I must believe and act; He is asking faith of me,” and she had the servants do just as He said, and she tasted that miracle.

We learn a great deal through Mary, through the servants who have gone ahead. The part of your faith that is learned directly by reading the Bible is very small. You may say you know because you have read, but that knowledge is only knowledge; it has not truly become faith. That is why, when some problem comes, you cannot handle it by faith. That is why we must learn true faith, and that is why in the Kingdom of God, what comes later is better than the beginning. It is because within the Church of God, God has set up many channels of blessing before you, and because God has not only saved us but has also prepared the Kingdom of God and prepared blessings in order to give us better things later. It is good because when we follow by faith, we can taste more blessings. I give thanks. I will close the message here. ✉

Sermon 3 by Paul C. Jong

Fill your heart full of the word of God

< John 2:1-10 >

“On the third day there was a wedding in Cana of Galilee, and the mother of Jesus was there. Now both Jesus and His disciples were invited to the wedding. And when they ran out of wine, the mother of Jesus said to Him, ‘They have no wine.’ Jesus said to her, ‘Woman, what does your concern have to do with Me? My hour has not yet come.’ His mother said to the servants, ‘Whatever He says to you, do it.’ Now there were set there six waterpots of stone, according to the manner of purification of the Jews, containing twenty or thirty gallons apiece. Jesus said to them, ‘Fill the waterpots with water.’ And they filled them up to the brim. And He said to them, ‘Draw some out now, and take it to the master of the feast.’ And they took it. When the master of the feast had tasted the water that was made wine, and did not know where it came from (but the servants who had drawn the water knew), the master of the feast called the bridegroom. And he said to him, ‘Every man at the beginning sets out the good wine, and when the guests have well drunk, then the inferior. You have kept the good wine until now!’”

A life whose wine has run out

Today’s message is about a wedding feast. That the wine ran

out at a wedding feast is like something that often happens in human life. These days there would be no such thing, but in the old days, when people brewed liquor at home and served guests, it was something that could happen. Apart from this event, in our lives, though we prepare and strive to live well, something turns out to be lacking. Things happen such as running short of money or losing our health, and in the end our happiness is broken. There should be joy, as at a wedding feast, and we should live in joy all our lives, but failing to do so is the state of our lives.

But when told there was no wine, the Lord said to bring water and pour it into the stone waterpots. When they had poured in the water, He told them now to draw it out and serve it, and when they served it, the master of the feast tasted it and set it before the guests. The guests praised the host, saying that although word had spread that this house had run out of wine, the host had hidden away better wine to bring out later. This word tells us many things. Do you and I not want to become happy? Do we not want to live well all our lives, to become happy, and to keep that happiness?

Recently there was news that the chairman of a big company in our country committed a crime and was arrested and jailed. What is it like to become a chairman and then go to prison? He could have lived well with a good company, but he ended up in that state. Doing well and then collapsing is exactly the same thing as the wine running out.

To become happy, we must fill ourselves with the word of God

What this word tells us is the command to fill the stone waterpots with water. We want to become happier later than at

first, and once happiness gets on track to some degree, we want that happiness to be kept. But human life has no power to keep happiness. So we become unhappy, and just when we have barely become able to get by, something breaks out and we suffer again; that is human life. But there is a way to become happy. Just as they drew water and poured it into the waterpots as the Lord told them, and drew it out again and served it, if you fill the vessel of your faith with the word of God, you become happier later than you are now. The point of this word lies exactly here.

To become happy, we must fill ourselves with the word of God. We must keep filling our hearts with the word of God, believe that word, and when something is lacking in our lives, fill ourselves with the word of God again. This is because the Lord is the One who makes our future better than our present. If we keep filling ourselves with the word of God and believe and follow it, our whole lives become better later than they are now. This fact is clear. Christians, too, must keep filling themselves with the word of God, and people who have not yet been saved must also keep filling their hearts with the word of God. You must not say, "I have believed in Jesus, so now I need nothing else."

Every time we worship, every time we study the Bible, at all times, we must learn the word of God, be sure of it, and fill and fill ourselves with it again. When our hearts become full of the word of God, true joy and happiness come to us. Are the hearts of you and me filled full of the word of God? Not yet. There are many people who do not even have the bottom covered yet. We must fill from the bottom, and it must keep rising—a quarter, two quarters, three quarters. When we fill ourselves in this way, our whole lives become better later than now and reach a blessed state.

When we keep filling ourselves with the word of God, holding on to it and believing it, that word turns into blessing and turns into power

I work together with you and also do a great deal of the flower-calyx work of the gospel. But compared with the work we do, little is accomplished quickly. In any kind of work, the fruit is not borne the moment you do it; the foundation must first be laid, and only when you do something on top of it does the result appear. If you try to produce results before laying the foundation properly, problems are sure to arise. The work of laying the foundation is extremely important. Usually people use up all their strength while laying the foundation, get discouraged, and often quit. But if you lay the foundation sufficiently and keep pushing forward step by step, praying, believing in God, and filling your heart with the will of God, what comes later becomes far better than now, and you bear much fruit. As the saying in our country goes, “Sweetness comes after bitterness,” and good days come after hardship. We must endure the present hardship well and keep moving toward better days, filling ourselves with the word of God at all times.

If you pick and eat only what is sweet in the present and do not prepare, you become destitute later. People who wander about looking only for what is sweet first usually find life itself hard. It is said that our country has a high suicide rate among developed countries, and in particular, this place where I live is said to have the highest suicide rate among the elderly in the whole country. It is really a bitter story. Why is it so? They ought to have prepared for the future and built up solidly, but at every moment they only picked out and ate the sweet things of life. As they grow old, there is no security, their children do not care for them, and their lives seem to have been lived in vain, so the

sound of wailing comes out. Success in life is filling the waterpots with water. What is that water? It is the word of God. When we keep filling ourselves with the word of God, holding on to it and believing it, that word does not just stay inside us; it turns into blessing and turns into power.

It is the same with the word of the gospel of the water and the Spirit. When you fill your heart with this word of the gospel—that Jesus bore your sins with the baptism He received from John, died on the Cross receiving the judgment of those sins, and rose again—that word does not just stay inside you; it turns into power, removes your sins, and gives you peace and joy. A work of God takes place.

Just look. Farmers find weeds sickening. The crops whose seeds they sowed sprout and then die, but weeds keep coming up even though no one sowed them. One year, after pulling out all the weeds and putting up a plastic greenhouse, not a single weed came up, but the next year, when the cover was removed, weeds came up as green as if they had been sown. Why is that? The seeds that had fallen long ago were hidden in the ground, and when it was uncovered they all came up. Because God commanded the earth to bring forth the herb that yields seed and the fruit tree that yields fruit, that word has power and they keep coming up. There is one person in our church who cannot stand the sight of weeds and pulls them all out, but even if he does nothing all day but eat and pull them out, it is of no use. When you go and look a little later, weeds have come up again. The word of God cannot be overcome. In the same way, when you fill the hearts of you and me with the word of God, that word turns into power.

You and I struggle because of our lack, thinking, “Why am I like this?” In fact, people are lacking by nature. But have you ever prayed about that lack? Have you ever prayed, “God, I lack

wisdom; please give me wisdom”? Far from praying, our pride is hurt, so we absolutely never pray about our own lack. We hate even to speak of it and hate to let others know, so we pray halfheartedly and then, with our pride hurt, give it up altogether. You need wisdom, you need understanding, you need health, you need faith, and you need happiness. How many things you need! To obtain what you need, you must fill yourself with the word. There is no other way.

Above all, we must fill our hearts with the word of God

If the servants at this wedding feast had had many thoughts of their own, what would have happened? Being told to bring wine and yet told to pour water into the waterpots, they would have refused, saying that even the taste that remained in the wine jars would be washed away. They would have said, “Why are You troubling us with such useless words?” After they had filled them all, He told them now to draw it out and take it to the guests. They would have thought, “Is He planning to get us beaten to death? If we take plain water no different from dishwater and call it wine, won’t we get slapped in the face?” If they set plain water before guests who had already drunk a lot of wine at the feast, wouldn’t the guests get angry, asking whether they were being made fun of? But the servants poured because He told them to pour, and took it because He told them to take it. The result was great cheers. And the host was praised: “So you kept the good wine hidden until now and are giving it to us; the host of this house is truly a good host!”

Each of us has a vessel of a different capacity, and there are also those whose bodies are weak. Rather than trying to do a lot

of work only with the body, we must work using skill and wisdom, and the one who assigns the work must also assign it appropriately. But above all, we must fill our hearts with the word of God.

We must take a lesson from this. Where did the miraculous work of water turning into wine take place? It took place in the faith of the servants. When Jesus told them to pour in water, the servants did as they were told. Would they have done it without faith? If they had had many thoughts of their own, they would have laughed it off. But they had the faith that all they had to do was do as He told them. In between, Mary played a role. Isn't Mary the one who had gone ahead? Jesus is God and Mary is a human being, but Mary knew that Jesus, though her own child, was God. Since He was not a child born through a man but the One conceived according to the word the angel delivered, Mary knew it by experience: "He is my son, but He is God, the Creator, the only Son of God the Father, and the Savior of mankind. Since He is the One who can even raise the dead, He can solve a matter like the wine running out in no time." So she told the servants to do as He told them. The servants, too, following the faith of Mary, believed, "He is absolutely not one who would lie; all we have to do is do as He tells us," and when they acted on it, it was done. This is exactly the point of what the Bible says.

Are you filling yourselves with the word of God?

Dear fellow believers, do you have problems? Fill yourselves with the word of God. Even if you feel that you believed but things did not go well, keep filling yourselves with the word of God. Does a waterpot fill up if you bring water and pour it in only once? It is said there were six stone waterpots, and ordinary

waterpots are big. The servants must have drawn water and poured it in over and over again. Even if you feel that you believed but nothing much came of it, still fill yourselves. Keep pouring. And look at those who have gone ahead. Are you filling yourselves with the word of God? Do you say, “I have been saved and have become a child of God, so everything is done”? Don’t you need wisdom, need power, and need blessings in order to do the work of God? If you need the help of God, you must fill yourselves with the word of God. You must learn faith and fill yourselves with it, and you must keep filling yourselves with the word of God as well. The word you have filled yourselves with becomes nourishment and becomes the driving force that brings power and blessing to every area. When you fill yourselves with the word of God, the other areas in which you were lacking also keep getting better.

I, too, am filling myself every day. These days I also work together with the brothers, and if I go every day and give orders only with my mouth, the workers do not do the work properly. I must also do the same work while giving orders. People have a scale in their hearts. They are weighing everything—whether that person who claims to be one who has gone ahead, who claims to be a servant of God, lives like a servant or not, whether he does it only with words or with his body. When I come home in the evening after working, I sometimes have no strength left, so I lie down just as I am without even washing. I sleep a while, get up, and wash, and there are days when I am so tired I cannot bear it. Even so, I fill myself with the word a great deal while revising manuscripts. We must fill ourselves with a great deal of the word and make a great deal of preparation.

Prepare a vessel of blessing

We must prepare a vessel to receive blessing. I made a 35-ton water tank; when you prepare a big vessel, a lot of water collects in it. If you do not prepare for water and just dip a thin hose into the stream, you can use only as much water as comes down through that hose. If you make a big pipe and connect it, you can use all the water that comes gushing out. Then, did God give little water? There is plenty of water in that valley.

In the same way, God is giving many blessings to everyone. The question is whether a person has prepared a vessel of blessing, and whether he has prepared the vessel and is filling himself with the word of God every day. According to that, it is decided whether one receives many blessings or few. Those who have prepared much receive much, and those who have not prepared become destitute as time goes by.

Do you think the blessing of God just rolls in for free even though you have not prepared? Absolutely nothing comes for free. Do not regard God as a liar. God does not work in such a way as to throw blessings for free into the arms of those who have not prepared. That Abraham became the source of blessing was also because he believed the word of God and filled his heart with the word of God, and so he became rich in faith and rich in life. Would he have become rich automatically, without filling himself with the word? We must fill ourselves. We must prepare the vessel. To be loved by God, we must do what pleases God; to receive blessings, we must prepare the vessel; and we must fill our hearts with a great deal of the word of God and follow the will of God. I have told you these three things. They are certain.

We are now doing the work of filling ourselves with the word. Because we want to receive more blessings, we are preparing

more vessels. God has given many blessings upon our church, but we hope that He will fill us even more than this. We hope He will fill us so abundantly that even after we preach the gospel to the whole world, there will be more than enough left over for us to use. People say, “This much is enough, so why do you keep preparing vessels and making things hard?” But what has already been done wanes before long. We must prepare more. Until now you have filled yourselves with the word of the gospel of the water and the Spirit; fill yourselves with many other words of God as well. I hope you will hear and look at the word a great deal, worship, and fill your hearts with many blessings according to the will of God. I want God to give you blessings. I will close the message here. ✉

Sermon 4 by Paul C. Jong

The wine of the wedding feast, a life of faith better later than at the beginning

< John 2:1-11 >

“On the third day there was a wedding in Cana of Galilee, and the mother of Jesus was there. Now both Jesus and His disciples were invited to the wedding. And when they ran out of wine, the mother of Jesus said to Him, ‘They have no wine.’ Jesus said to her, ‘Woman, what does your concern have to do with Me? My hour has not yet come.’ His mother said to the servants, ‘Whatever He says to you, do it.’ Now there were set there six waterpots of stone, according to the manner of purification of the Jews, containing twenty or thirty gallons apiece. Jesus said to them, ‘Fill the waterpots with water.’ And they filled them up to the brim. And He said to them, ‘Draw some out now, and take it to the master of the feast.’ And they took it. When the master of the feast had tasted the water that was made wine, and did not know where it came from (but the servants who had drawn the water knew), the master of the feast called the bridegroom. And he said to him, ‘Every man at the beginning sets out the good wine, and when the guests have well drunk, then the inferior. You have kept the good wine until now!’ This beginning of signs Jesus did in Cana of Galilee, and manifested His glory; and His disciples believed in Him.”

We must revere God, the Absolute One

That we have been protected and saved is because we have a heart that believes in God, respects and loves Him, and follows God alone. It is also because we believe what He has done. No matter how much you believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, it is of no use if you do not serve Him with a heart that follows God alone, and neither respect nor worship Him. To revere means to love, respect, and fear. We must respect, love, and fear God, the Absolute One, and know what kind of being we are before God. When we want to follow God alone, to believe in Him alone, and to serve Him alone, all the things the Lord did when He came to this earth and saved us with the gospel of the water and the Spirit truly become the food of life for us.

If there is no heart that wants to follow God alone and serve Him alone, even the gospel becomes nothing more than an illusion, one's own idea. But God exists. He who said, "I AM WHO I AM," God who made the universe, exists. He spoke to us, came to us, and saved us. Therefore, the person who wants to respect, love, follow, and serve Him alone is saved by accepting in his heart the salvation He gave, that is, the light of the truth. Everyone who accepts that salvation obtains salvation by the faith that acknowledges his own evil, acknowledges that he is a sinner, and believes. Without a heart that reveres God—a heart that respects, loves, and acknowledges Him—even the gospel of the water and the Spirit is nothing more than a fantasy. When we want to follow, respect, love, and believe in God, all the things He has done for us have their effect. To the person who does not acknowledge God, even the gospel of the water and the Spirit becomes nothing more than one of countless religious doctrines.

God, who made the universe, exists

It is said that scientists, while investigating galaxies, discovered a new galaxy. A certain astronomer, looking through an astronomical telescope, discovered the galaxy that is in the farthest place. It is said to have been a galaxy that one could see only by traveling billions of years at the speed of light. If so, there must be many galaxies in even farther places. God said, "Let there be the greater light and the lesser light and all the stars in the heavens; let there be living creatures on the earth and in the waters; and let birds fly in the air," and it was so. God made all that vast universe and all things and the galaxies. Even this earth is nothing more than a tiny star within a galaxy, but God placed us human beings there. The One who made the universe is God.

God exists. He made all things. He did the work of coming to us and saving us when we had become sinners. Because He exists, everyone who believes in His existence has a heart that wants to love, respect, serve, and follow Him. First of all, we Christians must have this heart. Even living the life of faith now is not something we do automatically just because the Lord has saved us. We do it because He exists, and so we acknowledge and believe in Him, and because all His words come to pass, and so we want to follow that word. That we were saved is, first, something that came about by our acknowledging God. It is something that came about by our believing that when we had become sinners, God had pity on us and came to save us and saved us with the gospel of the water and the Spirit. I give thanks that He has enabled us to love, respect, and follow God and to live now as workers. This faith is the whole of faith.

A life of faith that is better later than at the beginning

The passage we read today says that the wine served later was tastier than the first. It is the same with believing in the Lord. There are many things that are better later than when we first believe. Laying the groundwork at first is extremely hard. First, there must be a heart of reverence, that is, a heart that acknowledges, loves, respects, and wants to follow God. Second, we must believe that God loved us and removed our sins. Jesus received all our sins passed on to Him by being baptized by John the Baptist in the Jordan River, bore those sins and died on the Cross shedding His blood, and rose again, thereby saving us from sin. Believing in this gospel of the water and the Spirit becomes the foundation, and on that foundation we want to follow the command of the Lord and preach the gospel to the whole world.

Serving the Lord is hard. Yet as we keep following the will of the Lord, the Lord bestows grace on us. He bestows more grace than at the beginning, and He does the same for us, just as wine better than the first was kept back and then given to be tasted later. In our lives, too, we are born into this world and taste the sweetness that comes from human beings and taste pleasures like wine, but as time passes they all disappear. But we must believe in the Lord and accept the word of the Lord in our hearts. As we hold on to the word and fill our hearts with it—with an attitude of learning every day, with a heart that holds on, with a faith that believes—greater joy and greater satisfaction come later than when we first believed. Those who believe in Jesus say that when they first believe, they are so joyful that it feels as if their feet do not touch the ground. Then, as time passes, they tend to think there is nothing to it, and that

it is no different from living a religious life. But those who do the will of the Lord are not like that. Because they walk with the Lord, because they do what pleases the Lord, they experience the Lord accomplishing things. So they come to experience receiving more blessings, both spiritual and physical, later than at the beginning. This experience is the life of faith.

Dear fellow believers, if later were not more joyful than when we first believe in Jesus, who would live the life of faith to the end? No one. As time goes by from when we first believed, the weaknesses of you and me also come to light a great deal. Along with that, the grace of the Lord also becomes deeper, greater, and better day by day. The word and the blessings that the Lord wants to give us actually come upon us more and more. For a person who lives the life of faith properly, as time goes by, faith becomes deeper and better. What we once knew only in theory, we now come to experience.

In fact, the things we like for human reasons are nothing. Even when a man and a woman are so in love that they are half out of their minds, it does not last long. But there comes a time when human joy all runs out, like the wine in the waterpots. When we ask the Lord to help us, to give us blessings, to save us from sin, and to give us great joy, the Lord comes to us and gives us greater joy and a more satisfying salvation. Human joy does not last long, but the joy of the person who lives walking with the Lord, revering God and carrying out the will of God, deepens and grows as the days go by.

Those who fail to do so shrivel up as time goes by. Those who do not have true faith, those who have no heart that reveres God, even if they have believed in the gospel, live a hollow life of faith, as if grasping at empty air. As it says that faith is the substance of things hoped for and the evidence of things not seen, our faith is real. Doing overseas missions is real, serving the

gospel is real, doing the flower-calyx work is real, and preaching the gospel through the literature ministry is real. It is truly an amazing thing. It is not boasting.

We preach and hear the word of the gospel of the water and the Spirit, and translate it into books and spread it throughout the whole world. Everyone who comes into contact with the word of God through the books can come to know who God is, why we must revere God, and why a heart that respects God arises and why one comes to want to believe in and follow Him. It may seem that we only preach the gospel every day, but within that gospel there is reverence for God, there is the desire to follow Him, there is coming to know our own existence, and there is coming to believe and obey.

Because there are these words of reverence and obedience, coworkers around the world spend their own money and stake their own lives to preach the gospel. In fact, there are only a few people to whom we pay a salary. They all do it on their own. If it were you, after reading a few books sent by a foreigner, would you give up even your job in order to distribute those books and do that work? It is something that cannot be done unless the Holy Spirit governs one's heart.

There must be one who has gone ahead

If you want to live the life of faith properly, there must be one who has gone ahead in your heart. Here, Mary played the role of one who has gone ahead. In Catholicism they regard Mary as a mediator, and they pray to Mary with a prayer that says, "Mary, full of grace, pray for us." I know Catholicism well. I lived within Catholicism, and I was even recommended to become a priest. But there was exactly one reason I could not

become a priest. It is because, by a human logic that makes no sense, they not only make Mary a mediator and pray to God through her, but also exalt her to a virtually divine position, even calling Mary the spouse of the Holy Spirit. Just as you and I receive salvation by the Holy Spirit coming upon us when we accept the word of God, Mary played the role of accepting the word. She was used as an instrument for Jesus to be born on this earth putting on a human body; she is not the wife of God the Father.

The logic that she is the wife of God the Father is the logic of the flesh. Long ago there was a man who was raising his nephew, the son of his dead brother. Because that nephew found life hard and difficult, he went to church to receive comfort and prayed, calling on “Father God.” And he led his uncle to church. But when the uncle thought it over quietly, he wondered how the family tree would work if his nephew called God Father. He thought that then God would be his older brother, and so he called God “Elder Brother,” so the story goes. The logic of Catholicism is like that. They fit everything together by human, fleshly logic. I am not trying to slander; I am just stating the facts as they are. That is why I could not become a priest, and I prayed clearly that I would become a pastor, and God led me on the path of a pastor.

For the life of faith to become better later than at the beginning, there must be a guide. Here Mary, as one who had gone ahead, guided the servants who were behind her. She said to do whatever He told them, and when Jesus told them to fill the waterpots with water, they filled them, and when He told them to draw some out and take it, they drew it out and took it. Then the people tasted it and praised the host of this house, saying that he had brought out better wine later than at first and had kept it for them and given it to them. In this way, there must

be a guide. You need not think of a guide as something grand. The true Guide is Jesus; we are little shepherds; and beneath that, the people who are a little ahead of you are your guides.

If the distance in faith is too great, one cannot even guide. If the difference is too great, the one ahead just passes over it with pity, thinking that the person is acting that way because he is too young. He says nothing but words of comfort like, "It's hard, isn't it? You are working hard." But those who are a few steps ahead of you do not just let things pass. They point out what is wrong with you and peck at you the way a chicken pecks at its feed, so that you come to your senses. It is extremely good for you. If there were no one to point things out to you, your faith could not grow. In faith, the best is the older sister just above you, the older brother just above you. A much older brother, when he looks at the youngest sibling, sees only cuteness no matter what the child does, and so he cannot lead the child to become a proper person. If you truly want to grow in faith, you need one who has gone ahead, close by, who points things out to you.

The faith of Mary, who accepted the word

Mary said to do whatever He told them. Mary knew that although He was the son she had borne with her own body, that son had not been born through a relationship with a man. Through the word of God delivered by the angel, she knew that God had used her body in order to be born putting on a human body, so as to come as the Savior of mankind. That is why she said to do as He told them. Mary is a person of faith just like us, and a person of much experience. Look. Mary was able to conceive Jesus in her body by accepting the word the angel

delivered. You and I, too, can receive Jesus into our hearts as our Savior by accepting the word of the gospel of the water and the Spirit and the words of the Old and New Testaments—by revering God, by acknowledging Him, and by faith. It is exactly the same.

So the servants did as Mary guided them. It says that the people did not know where the good wine had come from, but the servants who had drawn the water knew. The servants know. Those who have served the Lord with reverence can know how God works to make them preach the gospel of the water and the Spirit. They also know how He blesses and in what areas He will bless in the future. It is not that we have come this far by chance. We have received blessings because God has blessed us, and because He will bless us in the future as well, we can serve the gospel even more, and we know it as if seeing it with our eyes. If you and I truly want to live better lives, we must accept the word of God in our hearts. We must respect and love God with reverence, and also know how to fear Him.

Submitting to God is a glorious thing

Ultimately, who is the One before whom we must bow? Is it not God? Is your pride hurt by bowing to God? It cannot be. He made the universe and made you and me, and He is the Master. He is the One who exists by Himself, and we are those created by Him, so would our pride be hurt by kneeling before Him, surrendering, and obeying? Rather, it is glorious. Bowing our heads before Him is a glorious thing. The more we submit, the more our souls flourish. If we do not submit, that much destitution comes to us. It is because we ourselves are nothing. In any case, I say this to myself and to you. By revering,

respecting, acknowledging, obeying, submitting to, and wanting to follow God, we can take on not only the salvation God has given us but also the work He has entrusted to us. For the future of you and me to become happier, we must accept the will of God and the word of God in our hearts, and submit and obey. I am telling you that our future can become better through obedience. It is absolute.

When He told them to fill the waterpots with water and they filled them with water, it turned into wine. Water turned into life. Those who obey the word of God receive many blessings. The Bible says, *“Those who are wise shall shine Like the brightness of the firmament, And those who turn many to righteousness Like the stars forever and ever.”* For those who have received the remission of sin, it is not only that they have received the remission of sin. We are now preaching and serving the gospel of the water and the Spirit throughout the whole world. Every time you and I do that work by faith, every time we go through hardship, ask for help by faith, and carry it out with the help of the Lord, more blessings come upon us and joy fills us. Dear fellow believers, isn't that so? It is so. These are not empty words or an illusion.

Fill your hearts with the word of God

I produce the literature, but I cannot do it perfectly. The one thing I can do is to put the content of the gospel, the content of the truth, into the writings. The polishing is done by the workers; it is not done because I do it well. Putting in the content is what matters. A novel does not become good just because the writer makes the words smooth. How the story unfolds is also a skill, but whether there is content or not is the first task. What good is

it if the words are splendid but there is no content? They are only the words of a smooth talker. Some books read easily and smoothly, but when you finish reading, there is nothing at all that they have said. A book without content is like trash.

There are many famous religious people in this world who speak well and reason well, but there is nothing there. Do they bring life to people? All they do is refresh the ears for a moment and stir up feelings for a moment. So people who live a religious life come to church several times a week, clap their hands, and pray prayers of repentance, but it is only an exercise of emotion. Because the emotion keeps dying down and they become depressed, they keep stirring up emotion. If they still do not feel relieved, they get up and make a commotion, and if they still do not feel relieved, they skip meals, go into caves, and wail. That wailing is the work of demons; what else would be the work of demons? In fact, it is a dreadful thing. The person who carries out the will of God is happy.

You are walking a very clear road. Even if it seems you have come this far by chance, you have come because there were those who had gone ahead, and the road you have taken until now is the right road. How many people throughout the whole world have received the remission of sin through us? How many people have been saved through the books? Yes. If the books we distribute did not properly carry the content of the gospel and were not the truth, there would be more than one or two people rebuking us to stop wasting money and quit. As I live, there are times when certain heretical groups send me a book. I wonder how they know that I am a pastor to send it, and as I look at that book, I think how much it must have cost to send it and how much labor it must have taken to print the book. But in the end I throw it into the trash can, saying that it would dirty my study. It is because a book without content, which is not the truth, ruins

your eyes, ruins your ears, ruins your heart, and even ruins your thoughts.

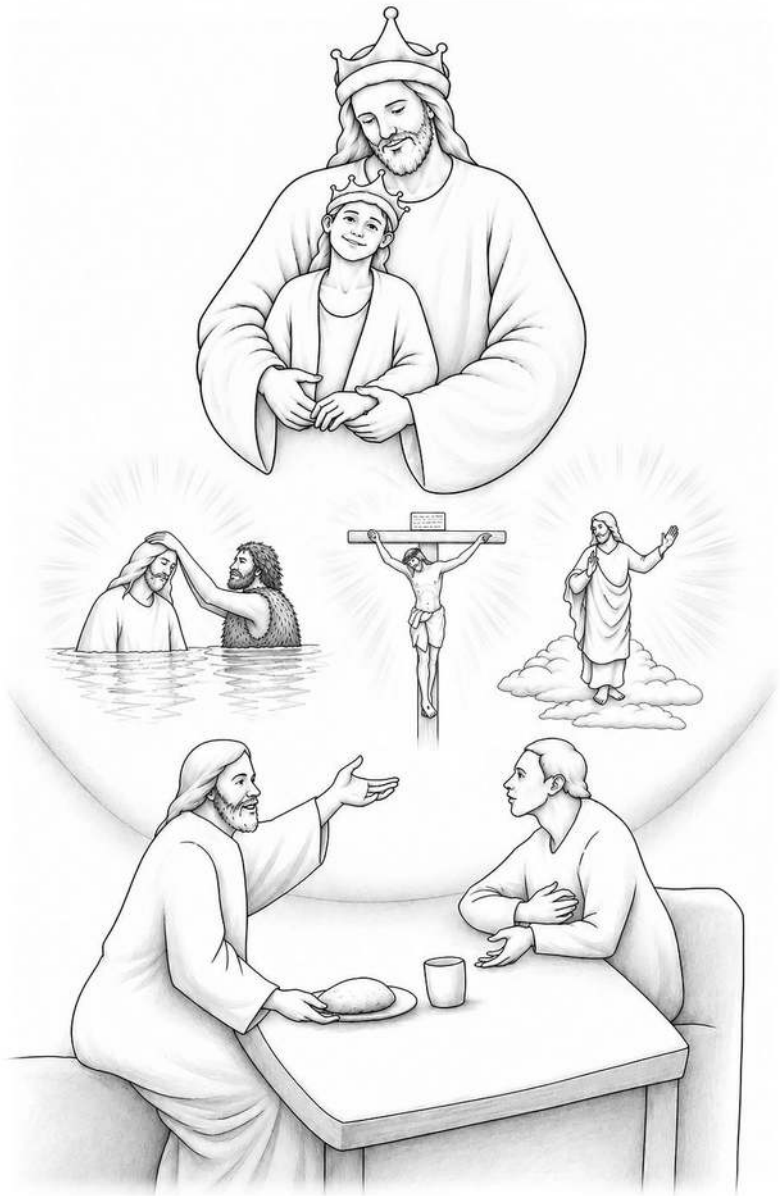
To deliver books to people all over the world, we now spend tens of millions of won on advertising costs alone, and the shipping costs to print and deliver the books are enormous. If these books had no content and nothing that brought people new life, it would be a matter of throwing money away in vain. Perhaps among you, too, there are some who would say, “Let’s stop now and buy something delicious to eat instead.” But the moment you have that thought, everything is over, and you will have to beg in order to buy something delicious to eat. God does not give money for free. It is because we do righteous work that He helps us and makes the business go well; it is not because we run the business well. Absolutely not.

At this hour I have no desire to stir up your emotions. Emotions rise up in a flash even when you gather among yourselves and belt out a song, and they rise up just from setting up an amplifier and letting it blare. Long ago, when I was tired, I once went behind the building and sang an old song for a long while. The elderly evangelist who lived inside, hearing it through the window, may have thought that the pastor was singing because he knew the evangelist wanted to hear that song, or may have thought that something had gone wrong with that man. Emotion is something that rises even from a snatch of song. But faith is not emotion. Dear fellow believers, don’t you want to live a better life later than now? If so, fill your hearts with the word of God. And revere that God. Believe. Submit. Follow. Then you will live a better life later than now. ☑

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CHAPTER

3



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John Chapter 3 seen from the perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit

In John 3:1–15, why did Jesus say that a person must be born again of water and the Spirit?

The reason Jesus said, “*Unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God,*” is that everyone born of the flesh has the nature of a sinner. No matter how much religious knowledge and how many good deeds one may have, a sinner cannot remove the sin of his heart or become a child of God by his own strength. Therefore, one must believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit that Jesus accomplished, receive the remission of sin, and be born again with new life.

1. Even Nicodemus needed to be born again

Nicodemus was not an ordinary man. He was a Pharisee and a ruler of the Jews, and a teacher who taught the Law to the people of Israel. Having seen the signs Jesus performed, he acknowledged that Jesus was a teacher who had come from God.

But Jesus did not praise the position or the Bible knowledge of Nicodemus; He immediately spoke to him as follows.

“*Jesus answered and said to him, ‘Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.’” (John 3:3).*

Nicodemus acknowledged Jesus as an excellent teacher, but he did not know by what method Jesus saves sinners. Acknowledging the power of Jesus and being born again by believing in the gospel of the remission of sin that Jesus accomplished are two different things.

Even if a person has religious position and Bible knowledge, if sin remains as it is in his heart, he cannot see the kingdom of God. This fact applies not only to Nicodemus but to everyone.

2. Because everyone born of the flesh is under sin

Nicodemus understood the words about being born again in a physical sense. So he asked how a man, when he is old, could enter his mother's womb again and be born.

Jesus said as follows.

“Jesus answered, ‘Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Do not marvel that I said to you, “You must be born again.”’” (John 3:5–7).

A person is born once in the flesh from his parents. But a person born of the flesh is born as a descendant of Adam, with the nature of sin. Even if the flesh were to be born a second time, the problem of sin would not be solved. This is because *“That which is born of the flesh is flesh.”*

Therefore, being born again is not a matter of correcting a person's character or improving his life. It is a sinner receiving the remission of sin by believing the work of salvation that Jesus accomplished, becoming righteous, and obtaining the life of God.

3. Because a person cannot be born again by his own deeds

Nicodemus was a man who knew the Law and tried to keep it. But Jesus did not say that one is born again by keeping the Law better. He said that one must be born “*of water and the Spirit.*”

A person cannot be born again by deeds such as the following.

- Offering many prayers of repentance
- Fasting and doing service
- Giving many offerings and doing many good deeds
- Receiving an office in the church
- Building up much Bible knowledge
- Confessing one’s sins over and over

Such deeds may appear in the life of faith, but they cannot become the basis of the salvation that removes the sin of the heart. Being born again is not a matter of a sinner striving to make himself new; it is receiving by faith the salvation that God accomplished through Jesus Christ.

4. “*Water*” refers to the baptism Jesus received from John

The water Jesus spoke of is not ordinary water that washes a sinner’s body; it refers to the work of salvation by which Jesus took charge of the sins of mankind through the baptism He received from John.

When Jesus was baptized by John, He said as follows.

“But Jesus answered and said to him, ‘Permit it to be so now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness.’ Then he

allowed Him” (Matthew 3:15).

The baptism Jesus received from John was the work of fulfilling all righteousness. With the baptism He received from John, the representative of mankind, Jesus had all the sins of the world transferred to His own body. That is why, when John saw Jesus the next day, he testified as follows.

“The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, ‘Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!’” (John 1:29).

The reason Jesus could take away the sin of the world was that He had all those sins transferred to Him with the baptism He received from John. When we believe this word of the baptism, we come to believe the fact that our sins passed on to Jesus and that the sins of our hearts have been washed away.

5. “*The Spirit*” reveals that Jesus is God and that He accomplished salvation

In the gospel of the water and the Spirit, the Spirit reveals that Jesus is not a mere man but God who came in the flesh. Jesus, who is God, Himself put on a human body and came, was baptized by John, received the judgment of sin on the Cross, and rose from the dead.

To be born again of water and the Spirit is to believe with the heart the following work of salvation.

1. Jesus is God who is the Word, who has existed from the beginning.

2. Jesus put on the flesh and came to this earth to save sinners.

3. With the baptism He received from John, Jesus had all the sins of mankind transferred to Him.

4. Bearing those sins, Jesus was hung on the Cross and shed

His blood, thereby receiving the judgment of sin.

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

6. The person who believes this gospel has all his sins washed away, and as the Holy Spirit comes upon his heart, he becomes a child of God.

Therefore, the water and the Spirit are not two separate salvations. They are one complete salvation that Jesus, who is God, accomplished with the baptism He received from John, the blood of the Cross, and the resurrection.

6. Before being hung on the Cross, He first had to take charge of the sin of the world

In John 3:14–15, Jesus explained the way of being born again of water and the Spirit by connecting it with the event in which Moses lifted up the bronze serpent in the wilderness.

“And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life” (John 3:14–15).

The people of Israel who were bitten by the fiery serpents in the wilderness could not remove the poison by their own strength. God had Moses hang a bronze serpent on a pole, and whoever looked at it lived. The power of healing lay not in human effort but in the word and promise of God.

Jesus’ words, *“Even so must the Son of Man be lifted up,”* mean that He would be hung on the Cross. But for Jesus, who had no sin, to receive the judgment of sin on the Cross, He first had to take charge of the sin of the world. That is why Jesus had all sins transferred to Him with the baptism He received from John, and bearing those sins, He was hung on the Cross.

Just as the people in the wilderness lived by looking at the bronze serpent, a sinner obtains eternal life by believing with the heart the fact that Jesus saved him with the baptism He received from John and the blood of the Cross.

7. Being born again is being born anew from a sinner into a righteous person

Being born again, the remission of sin, salvation, and regeneration all express the result of the one salvation that Jesus accomplished.

Before being born again	After believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit
A sinner born as a descendant of Adam	Becomes righteous by believing in the righteousness of Jesus
Sin is recorded in the heart	Has all sins washed away
Under the judgment of sin	Believes that Jesus was judged in his place
Has only the life that belongs to the flesh	Receives new life through the Holy Spirit
Cannot enter the kingdom of God	Becomes a child of God and obtains eternal life
Relies on his own deeds and merits	Relies on the salvation that Jesus completed

Having been born again does not mean that one's body and appearance have changed into those of a different person. The body remains as it is, but all the sins of the heart have been washed away and one's status has changed from a sinner to a righteous person. God accepts that person as His own child, and the Holy Spirit dwells in his heart.

8. Therefore, everyone must be born again

When Jesus said to Nicodemus, "*You must be born again,*" He was not making a suggestion; He was stating the essential condition for entering the kingdom of God.

The reasons a person must be born again are clear.

— Because everyone born of the flesh is a sinner.

— Because sin cannot be removed by human knowledge and religious deeds.

— Because as long as one has sin, he can neither see nor enter the kingdom of God.

— Because Jesus has already taken charge of all sins, been judged, and completed salvation.

— Because God gives the remission of sin, the Holy Spirit, and eternal life to the person who believes this salvation.

In conclusion, to be born again of water and the Spirit is to believe with the heart the fact that Jesus had all my sins transferred to Him with the baptism He received from John, that bearing those sins He shed His blood and was judged on the Cross, and that He rose from the dead and became my Savior.

When a person believes this gospel, all sins are washed from his heart, the Holy Spirit comes upon his heart, and the sinner is born anew as a child of God. That is why Jesus said, "*Unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God.*"

In John 3:16–21, why do people fail to accept the work of salvation by which Jesus saved mankind from sin?

John 3:16–21 reveals the fundamental reason people do not accept salvation even though God loved sinners and fully prepared the way of salvation.

The reason is neither that their sins are too many nor that God has prevented them from being saved. It is because they love darkness rather than the light and hate to have their sins and their wrong faith exposed that they do not accept the salvation Jesus accomplished.

1. God the Father did not send Jesus to judge 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. For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved” (John 3:16–17).

The purpose for which God sent His only begotten Son is clear. It was not to destroy sinners, but to save them from sin and judgment and give them eternal life.

The words *“For God so loved the world”* contain within them how God accomplished salvation.

— The Son of God put on a human body and came to this earth.

— With the baptism He received from John, Jesus had all the sins of the world transferred to Him.

— Bearing those sins, Jesus was hung on the Cross and shed His blood, thereby receiving the judgment of sin.

— By rising from the dead, He became the eternal Savior of those who believe.

God did not leave sinners to make the way of salvation by themselves. He sent Jesus and personally accomplished everything necessary for the remission of sin.

2. The reason one is condemned is that one does not believe the salvation of Jesus

“He who believes in Him is not condemned; but he who does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God” (John 3:18).

It is not because he did not believe in Jesus that a person newly becomes a sinner. He was already born in sin as a descendant of Adam and is under the judgment of sin. God sent Jesus in order to save such sinners.

Therefore, the person who does not believe, by rejecting the only salvation God has prepared, remains just as he is under the judgment he has already received. On the other hand, the person who believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit that Jesus accomplished does not receive the judgment of sin again, because Jesus received the judgment in his place.

What divides salvation from condemnation is not a person's merit or religious position, but whether or not he believes the work of salvation that Jesus accomplished.

3. Because they love darkness rather than the light

“And this is the condemnation, that the light has come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because

their deeds were evil” (John 3:19).

Jesus is the Light who came into the world. Light exposes what is hidden in darkness. When one stands before the word of Jesus, the fact is exposed that one is not a righteous person but a sinner.

The reason people do not come to the Light is that they do not want to give up their sins. If a person loves the pleasure that sin gives, the desires of the world, and a self-centered life more than Jesus, he does not accept the word that Jesus accomplished salvation, even when he hears it.

The problem does not lie only in the gospel not being clear. When a person’s heart loves darkness, he rejects even a clear word when he hears it.

4. Because they hate to have their sins and evil exposed

“For everyone practicing evil hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his deeds should be exposed” (John 3:20).

To come to the Light, one must first acknowledge God’s judgment that one is a sinner. But people want to save face and to keep their pride and their own righteousness.

The word of God does not look only at a person’s outward appearance; it exposes the heart. Before the word, even the greed, lewdness, hatred, pride, and falsehood harbored in the heart are revealed. The person who does not want to acknowledge this avoids Jesus, the Light, in order to hide his sins.

But acknowledging one’s sins is not for the sake of despair. It is because Jesus came precisely to save such sinners. The person who acknowledges his sins can accept the word of salvation that Jesus took charge of even those sins with the baptism He received from John.

5. Because they cling to their own righteousness and religious methods

Rather than acknowledging the fact that they are sinners, people try to become righteous by their good deeds and religious life. They try to solve the problem of their sins with prayers of repentance, service, offerings, fasting, and the works of the Law.

But the gospel of the water and the Spirit is not a gospel that recognizes the merit of sinners. It is the gospel that Jesus completely accomplished what sinners could not do.

If Jesus had all sins transferred to Him with the baptism He received from John and paid the whole price of those sins on the Cross, then a person should not try to wash his sins again by his own deeds, but should believe the salvation that Jesus accomplished.

For the person who clings to his own righteousness, the word “I am saved by believing what Jesus accomplished, without doing anything myself” is hard to accept. This is because he has to lay down his own religious labor and merit.

6. Because they do not fully know the work of salvation of Jesus

Some people know the fact that Jesus shed His blood on the Cross, but they do not clearly know why Jesus was judged on the Cross. It is because they do not know the fact that Jesus first took charge of all the sins of the world with the baptism He received from John.

The work of salvation of Jesus cannot be separated into parts.

The ministry of Jesus	The meaning of salvation
The incarnation	God came as a man to save sinners
The baptism He received from John	All the sins of mankind were transferred to the body of Jesus
The blood of the Cross	He received in our place the judgment of the sins He had taken charge of
The death	He paid the price of sin completely
The resurrection	He testified to the completion of salvation and eternal life

If one believes only in the Cross, leaving out the baptism of Jesus, it does not become clear what sins Jesus bore and was judged for. The gospel of the water and the Spirit is the gospel that believes the incarnation of Jesus, the baptism He received from John, the Cross, and the resurrection as one complete work of salvation.

7. Because they believe their own thoughts more than the word of God

God has said that He completed salvation through Jesus. But people believe their own feelings and experience more than the word of God.

They think, “I am still lacking,” “I still commit sins,” “My sins will disappear only when I become a little holier.” When a person makes his own condition the standard of salvation in this way, he cannot believe the perfect salvation that Jesus

accomplished.

Salvation is not based on how holy I have become. It is based on the word of God that Jesus took charge of all my sins and was judged. The person who exalts his own thoughts above the word of God ends up living with sin still in his heart even while saying that he believes in Jesus.

8. The person who follows the truth comes to the light

“But he who does the truth comes to the light, that his deeds may be clearly seen, that they have been done in God” (John 3:21).

The person who follows the truth is not someone who originally had no sin either. He is a person who does not hide his sins and acknowledges that it is right for the word of God to judge him.

The person who follows the truth believes as follows.

— I was a sinner who was born a descendant of Adam and could not help but sin.

— I cannot remove my sins by my deeds and religious efforts.

— With the baptism He received from John, Jesus had all my sins transferred to Him.

— Bearing those sins, Jesus was judged on the Cross in my place.

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

— Therefore, my heart, which believes in Jesus, has no sin, and I have obtained eternal life.

The person who acknowledges the word of God in this way is the person who comes to the light. He does not display his own righteousness; he shows how God saved him.

Conclusion

The fundamental reason people fail to accept the work of salvation of Jesus is not that their sins are too many or that salvation is insufficient. Jesus has already solved the problem of all sins with the baptism He received from John, the blood of the Cross, and the resurrection.

Nevertheless, the reasons people do not accept salvation are as follows.

1. Because they love darkness rather than the light.
2. Because they hate to have their sins and evil exposed.
3. Because they love themselves and their own righteousness more than God.
4. Because they try to become righteous by their own religious deeds.
5. Because they do not fully know the work of salvation of Jesus.
6. Because they believe their own thoughts and feelings more than the word of God.

On the other hand, the person who acknowledges that he is a sinner and accepts in his heart the gospel of the water and the Spirit that Jesus accomplished has all his sins washed away, is saved from judgment, and obtains eternal life. God did not send Jesus to judge sinners; He sent Him so that the world through Jesus might be saved.

On the basis of the word of John 3:22–36, how are the ministry of John the Baptist and the ministry of Jesus connected?

John 3:22–36 shows that the ministry of John the Baptist was

not a separate ministry competing with the ministry of Jesus, but a preparatory ministry that testified of Jesus and led people to Him. John the Baptist prepared the way of the Lord and baptized Jesus so that the sin of the world was transferred to Him, and Jesus bore that sin, was judged on the Cross, and completed salvation.

1. People saw the two ministries as rivals

Jesus and His disciples baptized in the land of Judea, and John the Baptist also kept baptizing in Aenon. At that time the disciples of John saw people flocking to Jesus and said to John as follows.

“And they came to John and said to him, ‘Rabbi, He who was with you beyond the Jordan, to whom you have testified—behold, He is baptizing, and all are coming to Him!’” (John 3:26).

The disciples of John were worried that people were leaving their teacher and going to Jesus. But John the Baptist did not regard this as competition or failure. This was because people going to Jesus was the very fulfillment of the purpose for which he had been sent.

2. John the Baptist knew clearly that he was not the Christ

“John answered and said, ‘A man can receive nothing unless it has been given to him from heaven. You yourselves bear me witness, that I said, “I am not the Christ,” but, “I have been sent before Him.”’” (John 3:27–28).

John the Baptist did not put himself forward as the Savior.

He was a servant sent by God, a man who came before the Christ to prepare His way.

There were two important roles in the ministry of John the Baptist.

First, he cried out for repentance to the people of Israel and made them realize their sins. He prepared their hearts so that they would realize their sins and their state of having departed from God, and believe in the Messiah who was to come.

Second, he baptized Jesus. The baptism Jesus received from John is the work of salvation by which the sinless Son of God took charge of all the sins of mankind in His own body. Thereby Jesus had the sin of the world transferred to Him, and bearing that sin, He went to the Cross.

Therefore, John the Baptist pointed out sin, and Jesus took charge of all the sins of the world once and for all through the baptism He received from John.

3. John the Baptist is the friend of the bridegroom, and Jesus is the bridegroom

“He who has the bride is the bridegroom; but the friend of the bridegroom, who stands and hears him, rejoices greatly because of the bridegroom’s voice. Therefore this joy of mine is fulfilled. He must increase, but I must decrease” (John 3:29–30).

John the Baptist described Jesus as the bridegroom and himself as the friend of the bridegroom. The friend of the bridegroom does not make the bride his own; he leads her to the bridegroom. In the same way, the ministry of John the Baptist was not to hold people to himself, but to lead them to Jesus.

Here the bridegroom is Jesus Christ, and the bride refers to the people of God who have received the remission of sin by

believing the work of salvation of Jesus. When John the Baptist saw people leaving him and going to Jesus, he rather rejoiced greatly.

The words “*He must increase, but I must decrease*” do not mean that the ministry of John the Baptist failed. They are a confession that his preparatory ministry is finished and that now the work of salvation of Jesus must be fully revealed. John the Baptist was not the central figure of salvation; he was a witness sent to reveal Jesus.

4. Jesus is the Son of God who came from above

“He who comes from above is above all; he who is of the earth is earthly and speaks of the earth. He who comes from heaven is above all” (John 3:31).

John the Baptist was a man born of the earth, but Jesus is the Son of God who came from heaven. Therefore, there is a clear difference between the ministries of the two.

The ministry of John the Baptist	The ministry of Jesus
Was sent before the Christ	Came to this earth from God the Father
Cried out for repentance to the people	Gives sinners the remission of sin and new life
Baptized Jesus	Took charge of the sin of the world with the baptism He received from John
Testified of the Lamb of God	Bore the sin of the world and was judged on the Cross

The ministry of John the Baptist	The ministry of Jesus
As the friend of the bridegroom, guided people	As the bridegroom, made the saved people His own people
Finished his ministry and withdrew	Rose from the dead and completed salvation
Testified that people should believe in Jesus	Gives the remission of sin and eternal life to those who believe

John the Baptist was the witness who pointed to where salvation lies, and Jesus is the Savior who actually accomplished salvation.

5. Jesus is the One who gives the word of God and the Holy Spirit

“For He whom God has sent speaks the words of God, for God does not give the Spirit by measure. The Father loves the Son, and has given all things into His hand” (John 3:34–35).

Jesus is not a mere prophet or religious leader. He is the only begotten Son sent by God the Father, and the One who speaks the word of God. The Holy Spirit is with Him without measure, and God has entrusted all things into the hand of the Son.

Jesus took charge of all the sins of mankind with the baptism He received from John, was hung on the Cross and paid the wages of those sins by shedding His blood, and rose from the dead. This is the gospel of the water and the Spirit that saves sinners from sin and judgment.

The ministry of John the Baptist was to prepare for and

testify of this truth of salvation in advance. After baptizing Jesus, he testified that Jesus is the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world, and that He is the Son of God. Just as he testified, Jesus bore the sin of the world, was judged on the Cross, and accomplished salvation.

6. The testimony of John the Baptist leads people to faith in Jesus

“He that believeth on the Son hath eternal life; but he that obeyeth not the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him –ASV” (John 3:36).

The final purpose toward which the ministry of John the Baptist was directed was for people to believe in Jesus as the Son of God and the Savior. One must believe not in John himself, but in Jesus, of whom John testified.

To believe in the Son is not merely to acknowledge the name of Jesus. It is to believe with the heart the word of salvation that Jesus came to this earth as the Son of God, took charge of all our sins with the baptism He received from John, received the judgment of those sins on the Cross, and rose from the dead.

The person who believes this gospel has everlasting life. Because Jesus took charge of all sins and even received the punishment for those sins, no sin that must be judged remains any longer in the heart of the person who believes. God accounts that faith as righteousness, gives the Holy Spirit as a gift, and makes him His own child.

On the other hand, for the person who does not accept the word of salvation that the Son of God accomplished, sin remains as it is, and so the wrath of God also abides on him.

Conclusion

In John 3:22–36, the ministries of John the Baptist and of Jesus are connected as follows.

John the Baptist made people realize their sins and prepared them to receive Jesus. He baptized Jesus so that all the sins of the world were transferred to Him, and testified that Jesus is the Son of God and the Savior who took charge of the sin of the world.

Jesus took charge of the sins of mankind once and for all with the baptism He received from John, bore those sins and shed His blood on the Cross, and by rising from the dead, completed the work of saving sinners.

Therefore, the ministry of John the Baptist is the preparatory ministry that reveals Jesus, and the ministry of Jesus is the ministry of completion that actually accomplishes the salvation John the Baptist testified of and gives the remission of sin, the Holy Spirit, and eternal life. John the Baptist, as the friend of the bridegroom, led people to the bridegroom, and Jesus saved them from sin and made them the people of God. ✉

Questions and Answers on John Chapter 3

[Question] 1. Examine the importance and meaning of John chapter 3.

John chapter 3 is the core chapter of the gospel that reveals how a person enters the kingdom of God and obtains eternal life. Nicodemus was a Pharisee and a ruler of the Jews, and he even acknowledged the signs of Jesus, but he did not know the truth of being born again. Therefore, a person is not saved by religious position, knowledge of the Scriptures, or the efforts of the flesh, but must be born anew. Jesus said, *“Unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God”* (John 3:5).

To be born again of water and the Spirit is to obtain new life by knowing and believing the salvation that Jesus Christ accomplished. Jesus was baptized by John the Baptist and took charge of the sins of mankind, and bearing those sins, He was judged and died on the Cross, and He rose again and became our Savior. The Holy Spirit makes people believe this truth of salvation, and to the heart of the one who believes He gives the evidence that he is a child of God. Therefore, being born again is not a vague feeling or a religious experience; it comes about from believing with the heart the work of salvation that Jesus Christ accomplished with the water and the blood.

The word about the bronze serpent that follows shows what the faith that receives salvation is. Just as the one who was bitten by a fiery serpent in the wilderness lived when he looked at the bronze serpent on the pole, the person who was under sin and

judgment also obtains eternal life by believing in the Christ who was lifted up to save him. *“As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life”* (John 3:14–15). It is not solving the problem of sin by human effort; it is looking to the salvation that Christ accomplished and living by faith.

The source of this salvation is the love of God. The words *“For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son”* mean that God sent His Son in order to save human beings who would perish. That Son did not come to judge the world; He came so that the world through Him might be saved. Therefore, the love of God is not a love shown only in words, but the love of salvation that gave up the only begotten Son and solved our sin, judgment, and death.

At the same time, this chapter also clearly divides the results of faith and unbelief. He who believes in the only begotten Son is not judged, but he who does not believe has already been judged. Even though the light has come into the world, the one who loves darkness more because his deeds are evil does not come to the light. On the contrary, the one who follows the truth comes to the light and acknowledges and accepts the work of salvation that God has done. Therefore, John chapter 3 is not a chapter that speaks only of the love of God; it is a chapter that reveals together the eternal life of those who believe that love and the judgment of those who reject it.

The final testimony of John the Baptist also reveals well the significance of this chapter. When his disciples said that everyone was going to Jesus, John made it clear that he was not the Christ but a witness sent before Him. As the friend of the bridegroom, he rejoiced to hear the voice of the bridegroom, and confessed, *“He must increase, but I must decrease”* (John 3:30).

The mission of a true witness lies not in exalting himself, but in revealing Christ, the Savior.

Finally, this chapter testifies that Jesus Christ is the One who came from above and the Son of God who is above all things. He speaks the words that God has sent, and to accept His testimony is to acknowledge God as true. That conclusion is the words *“He that believeth on the Son hath eternal life; but he that obeyeth not the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him –ASV” (John 3:36).*

Therefore, John chapter 3 gathers and shows in one chapter the need for a person to be born again, the salvation of Christ accomplished with the water and the Spirit, the love of God who gave His only begotten Son, eternal life and judgment according to faith and unbelief, and the attitude of the witness who exalts Christ alone. In other words, the important significance of this chapter lies in the fact that it is the chapter that most clearly reveals how a sinner becomes a child of God and obtains eternal life.

[Question] 2. In John chapter 3 verse 1, what kind of person was Nicodemus?

“There was a man of the Pharisees named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews” (John 3:1).

Nicodemus was a Pharisee and a ruler of the Jews. He had much knowledge of the Scriptures and was a leader who was respected in society as well. Judging from the fact that Jesus called him *“the teacher of Israel,”* he was a man who had the learning and the position to teach the Scriptures to the people.

He came to Jesus by night after seeing the signs that Jesus had done. And he said, *“Rabbi, we know that You are a teacher come from God.”* He acknowledged Jesus not as an ordinary

man but as an outstanding teacher sent by God. But at this time he did not yet fully know Jesus as the Christ who would save him from sin, and he did not understand the word about being born again of water and the Spirit either. He was a man who had much knowledge of the Scriptures and a high position, but whose eyes had not yet been opened to spiritual things.

That does not mean, however, that Nicodemus remained as he was to the end even after hearing the word of Jesus. Later, when the Jewish rulers tried to condemn Jesus, he said, “*Does our law judge a man before it hears him and knows what he is doing?*” and tried to stop their unjust judgment. After Jesus died on the Cross, he brought a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about a hundred pounds, and carried out the burial of Jesus together with Joseph of Arimathea.

Therefore, Nicodemus was at first a man who, even with his high status and much knowledge of the Scriptures, did not know about being born again, but after coming to Jesus and hearing His word, he gradually came to know Him and believe in Him. At first he came by night, conscious of the eyes of people, but at the end he undertook the burial of Jesus at the time when Jesus was most despised. His example shows the fact that a person’s position and knowledge cannot take the place of being born again, and that true faith is finally revealed in the act of acknowledging and serving Jesus.

[Question] 3. In John chapter 3 verses 10–12, explain the spiritual state of the Jews revealed through the words with which Jesus rebuked Nicodemus.

Jesus rebuked Nicodemus, saying, “*Are you the teacher of*

Israel, and do not know these things?” Nicodemus was a religious leader who taught the Scriptures, but he did not understand the word that a person must be born again of water and the Spirit. He took being born again as a matter of the flesh, entering a second time into his mother’s womb and coming out. This shows that the Jews of that time knew the letter of the Scriptures and their own religious forms, but they had not realized the spiritual meaning contained in that word and the salvation that God accomplishes.

At first Jesus spoke to Nicodemus as an individual, saying “*to you*” and “*you*” in the singular, but from verse 11 He said in the plural, “*You do not receive Our witness.*” Therefore, this rebuke does not apply to Nicodemus alone as one person; it also reveals the state of the Jewish religious leaders whom he represented. They were in the position of teaching the word of God, but they did not actually receive the witness of that word.

Therefore, their problem did not lie only in the fact that they were a little lacking in knowledge. Even though Jesus clearly said, “*We speak what We know and testify what We have seen,*” they did not receive that witness. It was not only that they did not know; they did not believe. They had enough knowledge to acknowledge Him as a teacher come from God when they saw the signs of Jesus, but they did not fully know Jesus as the Christ who would save them from sin.

The words “*If I have told you earthly things and you do not believe, how will you believe if I tell you heavenly things?*” also rebuke the same state. It means that if they did not believe even when Jesus explained a person’s being born again plainly and showed them the things He was doing on this earth, how could they accept the Son of Man who came down from heaven and the salvation and eternal life He would accomplish?

In the end, the spiritual state of the Jewish religious leaders

of that time was a state in which they had knowledge of the Scriptures and religious authority, but, not having been born again, they did not know spiritual things, and even before the witness of God they did not believe. Their eyes stayed at the level of fleshly judgment, and even while teaching the Scriptures, they did not recognize the Christ of whom the Scriptures testify.

But this rebuke was not a condemnation meant to cast Nicodemus away; it was a word meant to lead him to being born again. In fact, after hearing the word of Jesus, he gradually came to know Him and believe in Him. Therefore, this word teaches us the fact that one cannot know the kingdom of God merely by knowing much of the Scriptures and having a religious position, but must accept the witness of God in the heart and be born again of water and the Spirit.

[Question] 4. In John chapter 3 verses 14 and 15, what event is prefigured by the words that the Son of Man must be lifted up, just as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness?

These words prefigure the event in which Jesus Christ, having taken charge of the sin of the world through His baptism, would be lifted high on the Cross and receive the judgment of that sin, and then rise from the dead. Its center is clearly the death of Jesus on the Cross. Concerning the words that Jesus would be lifted up from the earth, the Gospel of John also makes it clear, *“This He said, signifying by what death He would die” (John 12:33).*

Its background is the event of the bronze serpent recorded in Numbers chapter 21. The people of Israel became discouraged because of the way through the wilderness and complained

against God and Moses. So God sent fiery serpents, and many of the people who were bitten by the serpents died. When the people acknowledged their sin and asked Moses to pray, God spoke as follows.

“Make a fiery serpent, and set it on a pole; and it shall be that everyone who is bitten, when he looks at it, shall live” (Numbers 21:8).

Moses put the bronze serpent on a pole according to the word of God, and it is written, *“If a serpent had bitten anyone, when he looked at the bronze serpent, he lived” (Numbers 21:9).* The person bitten by a fiery serpent could not overcome the poison by his own strength. But the person who believed the word of God and looked at the bronze serpent on the pole lived.

This bronze serpent was a prefiguration showing Jesus Christ, who would later be hung on the Cross. Just as the poison of the serpent brought people to death, sin brought judgment and death to people. Bronze represents judgment, and the bronze serpent hung on the pole shows that sin and its curse are judged.

Jesus had no sin, but by being baptized by John the Baptist, He took charge of the sins of mankind. Bearing those sins, He was lifted high on the Cross and died shedding His blood, thereby receiving the price of sin and its judgment in our place, and He rose again from the dead and became our Savior. Therefore, the words *“even so must the Son of Man be lifted up”* mean that Jesus, who took charge of sin through His baptism, would be hung on the Cross and judged.

That the people of Israel in the wilderness looked at the bronze serpent does not mean merely that they looked at it with their eyes. It means that they believed the way of salvation God had spoken, just as it was. In the same way, to look to Jesus today is to believe the fact that Jesus took charge of our sins with His baptism, received all the judgment of those sins on the Cross,

and rose again.

That is why Jesus said, *“As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life”* (John 3:14–15). Just as the person bitten by a fiery serpent lived by looking at the bronze serpent, the person who cannot help but die because of sin also receives the remission of sin and eternal life by believing the salvation that Jesus Christ accomplished.

[Question] 5. In John 3:16, what is the meaning of the words “For God 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).

Here “God” refers to the Creator God, who made the universe and all things and man. And “the world” includes the natural world, but it refers in particular to all the people God made. In other words, you and I, who are under sin and judgment, are the world that received the love of God. God loved not just a few people with special qualifications, but all mankind, who could not help but perish.

The word “so” does not only tell how great the love of God is; it makes clear in what way that love was shown. God did not merely say in words that He loved; He gave His one and only Son to the world. That Son put on human flesh and came, and by being baptized by John the Baptist, He took charge of the sin of the world; bearing that sin, He was hung on the Cross and suffered judgment and death, and He rose again from the dead. Therefore, that God ‘so loved’ means the perfect love that actually saved sinners through the only begotten Son.

These words are also connected with the event of the bronze serpent that comes before them. Just as the people who were dying after being bitten by fiery serpents in the wilderness lived when they looked at the bronze serpent hung on the pole, the person under sin and judgment obtains life by believing in Jesus Christ, who was hung on the Cross. It is not paying the price of sin by one's own effort; it is believing the way of salvation that God prepared.

The words that God 'gave' His only begotten Son contain not only the meaning that He sent the Son into the world, but also the meaning that He gave up the Son's body for our sins and had Him judged. *"In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins"* (1 John 4:10). It was not that man first loved God; God first loved sinners and accomplished the work of salvation.

The purpose of this love lies not in condemning the world and destroying it, but in saving it and giving it eternal life. The object of the love is the world, but the one who receives and enjoys the salvation accomplished by that love is the one who believes in the only begotten Son and the work He accomplished. 'Not perishing' means escaping from the judgment of sin and from the death that cuts one off from God, and 'obtaining eternal life' means receiving the remission of sin and obtaining the new life of living with God forever.

Therefore, the words *"For God so loved the world"* mean that the Creator God first loved all people who were under sin and destruction, gave up His only begotten Son and completed salvation through the Son's baptism, the Cross, and the resurrection, and gave eternal life to those who believe in Him.

[Question] 6. In John chapter 3 verses 17 and 18, examine the two meanings of the judgment that God brings.

“For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved. He who believes in Him is not condemned; but he who does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God” (John 3:17–18).

Here the judgment of God appears in two directions that are connected with each other.

First, God did not send His Son to condemn the world and destroy it; He sent Him to save the world. But that does not mean that God did not judge sin. God did not tolerate sin as it was; He made His only begotten Son, Jesus Christ, take charge of its judgment. By being baptized by John the Baptist, Jesus took charge of the sin of the world, and bearing that sin, He was hung on the Cross and received the punishment and death of sin in the place of sinners. Instead of judging sinners and destroying them, God laid their sin on the Son and judged the Son, and so saved sinners.

Therefore, the person who believes in Jesus Christ and the salvation He accomplished is not judged. This is because the judgment of that person’s sins has already been carried out in Christ. The words *“There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus” (Romans 8:1)* also have the same meaning. That the one who believes is not judged does not mean that God closes His eyes to sin; it means that Christ completely took charge of the demand of the Law and the judgment concerning that sin.

Second, the person who does not believe in the only begotten Son of God is in the state of being *“condemned already.”* It is not because God did not open the way of salvation; it is because

he does not believe in the Savior whom God sent and the work He accomplished, so that sin remains as it is in his heart. Though the light has come into the world, he loves darkness rather than the light because he hates to have his deeds exposed, and he does not accept the salvation God has given; this becomes the cause of that condemnation.

To be ‘condemned already’ does not mean that the final punishment has already been carried out; it means that the one who does not believe is now judged to be one who is under sin and death. On the other hand, He said that the one who hears the word of Christ and believes in God *“has everlasting life, and shall not come into judgment, but has passed from death into life”* (John 5:24). The person who has already passed from death into life by faith will not come into the future judgment in which the punishment for sin is received.

But if a person rejects the Son of God and His word to the end, the present state of judgment leads to actual punishment on the last day. Jesus, too, after saying, *“I did not come to judge the world but to save the world,”* said, *“The word that I have spoken will judge him in the last day.”* When He came the first time, He accomplished the work of saving sinners, but for the person who rejects that word of salvation to the end, on the last day that word becomes the standard of judgment.

Therefore, the twofold meaning of the judgment of God is as follows. For the one who believes, there is no condemnation and eternal life is given, because Christ received the judgment in his place. But for the one who does not believe in the only begotten Son and the salvation He accomplished, sin remains as it is, so he is already under judgment, and that state leads to eternal punishment on the last day. Before the same love and salvation of God, faith and unbelief are divided: faith leads to life, and unbelief to judgment.

[Question] 7. In John chapter 3 verses 19–21, what realities do “*the light*” and “*darkness*” each refer to?

Here “*the light*” does not mean simply good thoughts or a moral life. The light first of all refers to Jesus Christ Himself. Jesus also said, “*I am the light of the world. He who follows Me shall not walk in darkness, but have the light of life.*” In addition, the light means the gospel of the truth that Jesus Christ accomplished in order to save people from sin. That is, it is the fact that the Son of God came as a man, was baptized and took charge of the sin of the world, received the judgment of that sin on the Cross, and rose again to become our Savior. The person who accepts this light receives the remission of sin and new life.

The word “*darkness*,” on the other hand, refers to the state of human beings born in sin and the unbelief of not knowing God. Because people hate to have the fact that their deeds are evil exposed, they love darkness more than the light. Not acknowledging one’s sins but hiding them, following one’s own thoughts and desires rather than the word of God, and not accepting the salvation Jesus Christ accomplished—this is remaining in darkness. Therefore, darkness does not mean only that a person is weak and occasionally stumbles; it refers to the fundamental attitude of clinging to one’s own evil and rejecting Christ, who is the Light.

But the person who follows the truth comes to the light. He does not hide but acknowledges the fact that he is originally a sinner and one who cannot but receive the judgment of God. And he believes, just as it is, the word that God has removed all his sins through Jesus Christ. Coming to the light in this way does not mean displaying one’s own righteousness; it means acknowledging the word of God as right, believing the salvation

Christ accomplished, and living according to that light.

Therefore, the difference between the light and darkness is not simply the difference between a good person and a bad person. All people were originally in darkness, but the person who comes to Jesus Christ, who is the Light, and believes in His salvation obtains life. On the other hand, the person who hates the light and rejects Christ in order to hide his own evil remains in darkness, and by that very unbelief he reveals that he is already under judgment.

[Question] 8. In John chapter 3 verses 20 and 21, how does the person who follows the truth act?

“But he who does the truth comes to the light, that his deeds may be clearly seen, that they have been done in God” (John 3:21).

The person who follows the truth does not avoid the light for fear that his evil will be exposed. He truly accepts the word of God, and when his sins and weaknesses are exposed before the word, he does not hide or deny them but acknowledges them as they are. It is the exact opposite of the attitude of the one who practices evil, who hates the light in order to hide himself.

That he comes to the light means that he comes to Jesus Christ, who is the Light. He acknowledges that he is a sinner who deserves to be judged, and he believes the fact that Jesus Christ took charge of the sin of the world by being baptized, was judged and died on the Cross, and rose again and accomplished salvation. He does not try to become righteous by his own good deeds; he accepts the salvation God accomplished just as the word says.

The life of following the truth does not stop at having

received the remission of sin. He thanks and praises the Lord who saved him and follows the word of God. He also offers his body and mind to the righteous work that pleases God, and preaches the gospel so that others, too, may believe this truth of salvation. Even when weakness is revealed as he lives, he does not hide in darkness again; he acknowledges it before the word and holds on to the salvation the Lord accomplished.

The words *“that they have been done in God”* do not mean that he establishes his own righteousness or boasts of his own goodness. That he received the remission of sin and became a child of God is also a work God did, and his following the word and serving the gospel after being saved is also done within the will and guidance of God. Therefore, the person who follows the truth does not hide himself but comes to the light and believes the salvation of Christ, and with that faith he serves God and leads others to the truth.

[Question] 9. In John chapter 3 verses 29 and 30, what did John the Baptist emphasize through the analogy of the bridegroom and the bride?

“He who has the bride is the bridegroom; but the friend of the bridegroom, who stands and hears him, rejoices greatly because of the bridegroom’s voice. Therefore this joy of mine is fulfilled. He must increase, but I must decrease” (John 3:29–30).

The disciples of John the Baptist were jealous when they saw people leaving their teacher and going to Jesus. But John the Baptist did not see this as his own influence weakening. Rather, he rejoiced greatly to see people going to the Christ of whom he had testified.

In this analogy, the bridegroom is Jesus Christ, and the bride

is those whom the Lord saved and made His own people. John the Baptist is not the bridegroom but the friend of the bridegroom. The right to receive the bride belongs to the bridegroom alone, and the role of the friend lies in introducing the bridegroom and preparing His way. Therefore, John the Baptist did not try to hold people to himself. This was because their going to Christ and believing in Him was the very fulfillment of his mission.

The words “*this joy of mine is fulfilled*” mean that the joy of John the Baptist did not lie in his own name being exalted and his disciples increasing. His joy was that the voice of the bridegroom was heard, that people went to Christ, and that the saving work of Christ was accomplished. He knew clearly that he was neither the Christ nor the Savior, but only a man sent to testify of Christ.

Therefore, the words “*He must increase, but I must decrease*” are not simply an expression of humbling himself. They are a confession that Christ must be exalted as the Savior sent by God, and that His saving work must be fully accomplished. John the Baptist, on the other hand, had to withdraw once he had finished the mission of testimony entrusted to him.

What John the Baptist emphasized is clear. It is that the true Master of the saved people is Christ, and that a servant of God is not one who gathers people to himself, but one who leads them to Christ. Even if his own name and influence declined, if Christ was exalted and His will accomplished, to rejoice and be satisfied with that—this was the attitude of John the Baptist.

[Question] 10. Summarize the picture of Christ testified to by verses 31–35, the conclusion of John chapter 3.

Finally, this chapter testifies in four points who Jesus Christ is.

First, Christ is the One who came from above. The one born of the earth speaks of what belongs to the earth, but Christ came from heaven and is above all things. Therefore, Christ is not one person among created beings, but God who rules over all things, and the One who put on flesh and came in order to save us.

Second, Christ testifies to what He has seen and heard from God. His words are not human thoughts or knowledge learned in the world, but words that show the will of God the Father just as it is. Therefore, to accept the testimony of Christ is to acknowledge that God is true and that He is the One who surely fulfills His word.

Third, Christ is the One whom God has sent. Since it says, *“He whom God has sent speaks the words of God,”* the word of Christ is none other than the word of God. Because God gave the Spirit to Christ without measure, He knew the will of the Father fully and obeyed it and accomplished it just as it was.

Fourth, Christ is the Son who receives the love of God. The Father loves the Son and has given all things into His hand. To Christ has been entrusted not only the authority to rule over all things, but also the authority to save people, to give life, and to judge.

Therefore, the conclusion of verses 31–35 is clear. Jesus Christ is not a mere teacher or one of many prophets; He is the Son of God who came from heaven and God who is above all things. He testifies to the word of God just as it is, accomplishes the will of the Father, and is the King who holds all things in His hand and rules over them. Therefore, to accept the testimony of Christ and believe in Him is to believe in the true God.

[Question] 11. In John chapter 3 verse 36, explain the wrath of God.

John 3:36 says, *“He that believeth on the Son hath eternal life; but he that obeyeth not the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him –ASV”*

The wrath of God refers to the judgment in which God righteously passes sentence on the sinner and brings down the punishment that befits his sin. Its final result is eternal punishment, the opposite of eternal life—that is, eternal destruction and the punishment of hell.

Here *“he that obeyeth not the Son –ASV”* does not refer simply to a person who makes mistakes or falls short in his daily life. It refers to the person who does not accept in his heart, but rejects, the salvation Jesus Christ accomplished by taking charge of the sins of mankind through His baptism, receiving the judgment of those sins on the Cross, and rising from the dead. Since not believing in Christ is the sin of rejecting the truth of salvation that God accomplished, that person does not obtain eternal life and remains under wrath just as he is.

But God did not destroy sinners immediately; He had His Son, Jesus Christ, take charge of their sins and judgment. Because Christ stood in the place of the sinner and received the punishment, the person who believes in his heart the salvation He accomplished is saved from sin and judgment and obtains eternal life. On the other hand, for the person who rejects this salvation to the end, the judgment Christ received in his place is not applied, and so the wrath of God abides on him.

Therefore, the wrath of God is not a vague threat. A person belongs to one of two: either he believes in Christ and obtains eternal life, or he rejects Christ and remains under eternal judgment. John 3:36 clearly shows how weighty a matter it is to believe in the

heart the salvation God has given through the Son. ✉

Sermon 1 by Paul C. Jong

You must surely believe the true love of the Lord and be born again

< John 3:1-15 >

“There was a man of the Pharisees named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews. This man came to Jesus by night and said to Him, ‘Rabbi, we know that You are a teacher come from God; for no one can do these signs that You do unless God is with him.’ Jesus answered and said to him, ‘Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.’ Nicodemus said to Him, ‘How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter a second time into his mother’s womb and be born?’ Jesus answered, ‘Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Do not marvel that I said to you, “You must be born again.” The wind blows where it wishes, and you hear the sound of it, but cannot tell where it comes from and where it goes. So is everyone who is born of the Spirit.’ Nicodemus answered and said to Him, ‘How can these things be?’ Jesus answered and said to him, ‘Are you the teacher of Israel, and do not know these things? Most assuredly, I say to you, We speak what We know and testify what We have seen, and you do not receive Our witness. If I have told you earthly things and you do not believe, how will you believe if I tell you

heavenly things? No one has ascended to heaven but He who came down from heaven, that is, the Son of Man who is in heaven. And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life.’’

The characteristics of a person who is not born again

There is an expression, “Truly dumbfounding,” and though there have been many people until now, this affair was truly astonishing. God said that He does not look at a person’s outward appearance but examines the center of the heart, and it was exactly like that. Along the way there were many strange things, too, but I covered them over again and again, thinking that it was probably human weakness or just personality. But I saw some people who were working in the church treating the working children harshly. Even when stacking a single item, the young workers trembled, saying that it had to be done exactly as they were told. I found that strange. The children who did not tremble even when I spoke trembled like aspen leaves when those people spoke. I did not teach that way, and Jesus did not teach us that way either. As far as possible, we must give freedom and give authority. Whether the items are stacked vertically or horizontally, if there is a better way, one can simply do it that way. So I rebuked them. I said, why do you treat the children harshly, are you a god, shouldn’t you give the children a certain amount of freedom? I had told them to guide the children in skills, not to dominate even a person’s own authority.

As far as possible, I give everyone freedom. Even when doing work, I ask, “This is how it should be done, but what do

you think?” and if your idea is right, I say, “That is better than my idea; then let’s do it that way.” I back them up, saying, “Hey, you thought about it a lot; that is far better than my idea.” A person develops only when he can bring out his own ideas. The point is this: because they are not born again, they bow and scrape before those with power and flatter them, but they are merciless to those weaker than themselves. Bowing to the strong and trampling the weak is the characteristic of people who are not born again. A person who is not born again treats those under him harshly and tries to win people over to his own side by human methods. But do we have any side of our own? We are all on God’s side; what good would it do to make a side of one’s own? In the end, those people taught a faith different from ours, enticed those who listened to them well, stole things, took people out, and tried to build their own kingdom. They were not thieves who merely stole things; they tried to build a kingdom of man inside the kingdom of God. They were smart, but they had no wisdom.

Dear fellow believers, if someone says in a human way, “Follow me, I will treat you well,” and you follow that person, you are a foolish person. When I follow God and serve God, if you follow me, it becomes following God; but if I do not serve God and tell you to follow me, and you follow, you are standing on the side that opposes God. That way is death, it is hell, and it is a curse on this earth. If one is not born again, one becomes like that. If one is not born again, what does one serve? One serves the demons of the world. One stands on the side of those who hold power in this world, and if someone looks powerful, one goes there and flatters him. A person who serves God is not like that. For people who are not born again, material things and power are their god. Money is their god and power is their god. If they have money and power, they puff out their bellies and

throw their shoulders back, and they live relying on that power even if they go to hell. And they disregard authority. They despise offices in the church such as pastor and evangelist, and they live as if money is all that matters. This is not a story about those people only; anyone among us, too, becomes like that if he does not believe. So we must be careful, and we must believe.

The children are workers of God just the same

Those people tried to make the children their own people, take them out, and use them. But they underestimated the children far too much. The children are young only in body; they are not fools. Once they are past ten and reach fourteen, they think everything that can be thought. I absolutely do not look down on the children. I regard them as being on the same level as me and speak to them in the same way, so that they understand. Having no academic background does not mean one's thinking is low. Whether a person graduated from university or from elementary school, what they think is the same. Rather, a person without a degree may think more deeply. If you take statistics on the leaders who run big companies, there are far more who are not highly educated, and the highly educated often receive a salary under them. What is learned in the regular school curriculum is only the basics and an introduction. So there is no need to feel inferior because one's schooling was short, and nothing to boast of because one studied a lot. Everyone starts on the same footing after finishing all their studies.

What those people did to the children was a method of training animals. When training an animal, if it obeys well, you give it a little food, and if it does not obey, you give it no food. Then the animals obey well. In the same way, if the children

obeyed well, they took them along and treated them as if doing them a favor, and if they did not obey, they ostracized them. That is why the children trembled, saying, “I am afraid that I, too, will be ostracized.” But there is a scale in the human heart, and as time passes, everyone comes to know what that person was like. The children may make mistakes and may lack skills. If someone told me to try welding, would I do it well? To weld well, one must weld for dear life for at least six months. Theory can be learned in five minutes, but a skill must be acquired with the body. Ostracizing and trampling on children whose skills are immature is oppressing people. God is not like that. I am truly thankful before God that the children were kept safe, and we, too, should be thankful. The children are all members of the same fellowship and all workers alike. They are only young in age; what is different about them from us? When the younger ones pick a quarrel, an older brother pretends to be hurt and lets himself be hit a few times, and when the younger ones charge at him, he shouts and laughs and lets them hit him, and the children who hit him laugh happily, too. The righteous regard one another that precious.

A tree is known by its fruit

I thought about it a great deal. I even wondered whether it was because of something I had failed to do for them. The conclusion was that because they were not born again, they kept behaving in a way that abused people. A person who is not born again does that until he dies. Then restraints must be put in place. A person who abuses those under him must not be entrusted with an office. Offices are set up so that one may serve the people below, not abuse them. So it was not I alone who decided; we

held a meeting of the ministers and took away their offices. We demanded that they hand over what they had stolen, and we gave them a chance, too. But even when we presented evidence, they flatly said they knew nothing. All that behavior comes out because they do not believe. If one believes, one hands it over. We preached the gospel to those people fully and had them hear it again. But being born again is something one must believe for oneself; no one can do it in one's place. Truly, a person who is not born again becomes a thief and a deceiver. As it is written in Mark chapter 7, blasphemy and evil things come out of the human heart. Whenever an opportunity arises, they blaspheme. That is why Jesus said that a tree is known by its fruit. If you look at the fruit, you can know the tree. Whether a person is born again or not, you can tell it all by looking at how he treats the children.

One of those who left said that the devil made him do this and that he had not done it because he wanted to, and that even though he tried to turn back, he could not. Another said that he had lived without God in his heart. Because he lived without God, he was cruel to the children and taught a faith different from ours. I want you to know that you have been delivered from spiritual deceivers. Someone who left long ago left behind the words that the life of faith is a battle of wits. Those words are rotten words. That person took his whole family and left. And as he left, he said that not being able to turn back even though he wanted to turn back must be the curse of God. Those words are right. Not being able to turn back later even though one wants to—that is a curse.

“Unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God”

Dear fellow believers, is the life of faith a battle of wits? Can this Bible be interpreted with the head? Try bringing a person with the best intelligence and have him read the Bible. Can he interpret it? Even if you bring a philosopher, he cannot. Only a person who is born again can interpret the Bible. Saying, “This is how I believe,” is one’s own thought, and it is flesh. We must believe according to the word of God. In today’s passage, Nicodemus respected Jesus and said that He was a teacher come from God. Jesus said, *“Unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.”* It means: how could you see that I am the One who came down from heaven? Unless you are born again, you cannot see it. The heart must be honest. If there is sin, there is sin, and if the word of God says one goes to hell, one goes to hell. We go to hell not because we feel in our conscience that we have sin, but because God has established it as His law that where there is sin, there is punishment. Even sin cannot be established without a law. There is a law, and when that law is broken, it becomes sin. There are many laws in the kingdom of God, too. After we are saved, whether we have done well or wrongly is also decided not by each individual’s conscience but by that law.

Jesus speaks. He said, *“Unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God.”* What are the water and the Spirit? He is speaking of the gospel of the water and the Spirit. How simply He said it! And He said, *“That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit”* (John 3:6). What is the flesh? It is human thoughts and human feelings. What is the spirit? It is the word of God. The word is the law. Since God is Spirit, believing according to the word God

has spoken is spirit, and believing according to one's own feelings is flesh. We can be born again only when we believe according to the word. Where the wind blows from and where it goes, human eyes may not be able to tell, but the people of God know. Because God has recorded it in the word and we believe according to that word, we come to know that God has made us born again and that we have been born again by faith. The one who is born again knows, and the one who is not born again does not know. Nicodemus, too, knew that Jesus was no ordinary person, but he did not really know that Jesus is the Son of God and the Savior. So he asked and asked again. Then Jesus spoke. *"As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life"* (John 3:14–15). This very word is the gospel.

"As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness"

What was the event of Moses lifting up the serpent in the wilderness? In the wilderness the people of Israel complained against God. They complained, saying, "Why do You keep us in the wilderness? In the wilderness, the Israelites grew impatient on the way and spoke against God and Moses, complaining about the lack of food and water and despising the food God had provided. God hates complaining most of all. So He sent fiery serpents and had them bite the people. When bitten by a fiery serpent, their bodies swelled up and they were dying. Moses prayed to God. When he prayed for God to forgive this people for complaining against Him and to heal them, God spoke. He said, hang a bronze serpent on the end of a pole, set it up high, and have them look at it; whoever looks at it shall live. Moses

did as he was told and made it known to the people. At that time there were people who looked, and there were people who sneered and did not look to the end and died. There were two kinds of people.

Then what does the bronze serpent hung high on the pole mean? The serpent is the devil. The devil made us go against God and commit sin, and God judged that devil and hung him on the end of a pole and set him up high. It means that the devil has been judged. It means that God has removed the poison the devil released into us, that is, sin. How did He remove it? Jesus put on a human body and came to this earth, was baptized by John the Baptist and received all the sins of us human beings passed on to Him once and for all, and He Himself was hung on the Cross and received in our place the judgment and punishment for all the sins of mankind. The sting of death is sin, and sin brings death. All the sins inherited through Adam and Eve, Jesus took charge of once and for all by being baptized by John, and He was hung on the Cross and received all the judgment for sin, and in that way He saved us. He was bruised for our iniquities, and He was pierced for our transgressions. Because He received all our sins passed on to Him, He could be judged on the Cross and die.

Look at the figure of Jesus hung on the Cross. Nails were driven through His hands and feet, and when the cross was raised, His body was lifted up from the earth. It is exactly the same as the bronze serpent hung on the pole. Galatians says that everyone who hangs on a tree is cursed. In that age the most severe punishment was crucifixion. It was the most agonizing punishment, made so that with every breath drawn while nailed, all the blood of the heart flowed out. Jesus took charge of our sins by being baptized by John, gave up His body on the Cross to be nailed and to pour out all His blood and to receive the curse,

said, “It is finished,” and died, and He died and rose again and became the Savior of you and me. What the devil brought us was to make us sin and to make us die by that sin, but Jesus took charge of that sin with the baptism He received from John and died our death in our place. Therefore, we can be born again by faith. We can be born twice. Since Jesus received all the judgment for our sins, is there anything left for you and me to be judged for our sins, or not? There is not. That is why even at this hour we can come out and worship. Just with the sins committed today alone, if it were not for our thick faces, how could we lift our faces and look at one another? But because Jesus took charge of the sins of you and me with the baptism He received from John, was judged in our place, died and rose again, and saved us—because we believe in that Jesus as the Savior—we are thankful, and so we believe, and so we have been born again.

That God saved us through His own Son is the love of God

Dear fellow believers, when a child is dying in the hospital, some parents say that if only they could die in the child’s place, they would die and save the child. Some even ask to have their own heart transplanted. Such is the heart of a parent. But God so loved us that He sent His own Son, passed our sins on to His own Son, and even to the point of putting His own Son to death, He wanted to give you and me new life and wanted to bring us back to life. And He actually did that work. God actually saved you and me from sin, brought us back to life, and gave us new life; then what must we do? Must we not believe? Must we not believe that true love that God accomplished for all mankind? Should we refuse it, should we doubt it, or should we believe it?

We must believe. Believing is the right thing to do.

John 3:16 is the key passage. *“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.”* That He so loved means that, in order to bring you and me back to life, He sent His own Son to this earth, passed our sins on to His own Son, and brought down the judgment for our sins on His own Son.

Since God brought us back to life through His own Son, we must be grateful, we must believe, and we must give thanks. There is nothing for us to do but believe and give thanks. Obtaining new life and receiving the Holy Spirit are all the work God does. There is nothing we do. We only have to believe. We only have to receive the love of God into our hearts. Being born again is not difficult. A person who truly knows the truth speaks simply. He does not use difficult words and make people memorize them. Forcing on others what they have not studied is like trampling on people. God is not like that.

God not only loved us but actually saved us. He put on a human body and came to this earth, and in order to bring you and me back to life, He was baptized by John and received the sin of the world passed on to His own body, and He gave His body over to the Cross and died. Who would give up even his life for you? Even between parents and children, they can only weep and wail; a human being cannot be a savior. One can die for one's child, but one cannot save him. That is why God saved us through His own Son. It is the love of God the Father. It is love for you and me.

If you believe, you are born again, and faith grows

On this earth there is no savior other than Jesus. The only One who can save you from your sins, from your transgressions, and from all those curses is Jesus. And Jesus has saved you and me. Nicodemus, too, heard this word and became a person who believed. After Jesus was hung on the Cross and died, He was buried in the new tomb of a rich man, and Nicodemus came with myrrh and aloes and took part in that burial. Nicodemus, who had come by night and asked questions, believed, too. Dear fellow believers, are you not thankful to Jesus? I am truly thankful. I believe that the only One who can deliver me from all my sins and from my shame, the only One who can save me from all the punishment I would receive because of my sins, is Jesus. I believe that Jesus has saved me with the gospel of the water and the Spirit. Do you believe, too? That is right. If you believe, that faith is being born again.

And as we gather in the church, live the life of faith, and serve the gospel, faith grows while we hear the word. It grows even though it is not visible to the eye. When time has passed, you find that your faith has grown a great deal. Because you are here, you do not know it, but if you talk with people in the world who generally believe in Jesus, your faith is at a very high level. The difference is as great as between heaven and earth.

In the old days, when my evangelist friends came, I told them to try having fellowship with the Sunday school students of our church using only the word. I said, do you know what kind of church a born-again church is? Do you think you can look down on it just because it is Sunday school? Ask them about the Bible. There were times when I spoke with that much pride. Since the Lord took charge of all the sins of the world with the baptism He received from John, received all the judgment for sin by being

nailed to the Cross and shedding His blood and dying, and rose from the dead and saved us, we must believe and be born again. If we believe, we are born again, and if we are born again, faith grows as time goes by. And at the very least, we no longer do things only for our own benefit. In the church, is there any worry about food, clothing, and shelter? Is there any worry while serving the Lord? We live well. Are the people who stole things and left, saying they would live well by themselves, living well? It is a foolish thought. It is a thought that comes from not knowing how many things those who have gone ahead have prepared.

By all means, let us not become people who, not being born again, act as thieves, hinder the Church of God, and hinder the preaching of the gospel. If one is not born again, one naturally becomes such a person. One comes to seek only one's own benefit. One becomes an evil person without even knowing it. A person must surely be born again. One must surely believe. One must believe the true love of God. God really loved you and loved me. We must believe that love. If you do not believe, the devil takes hold of your heart. That is why I exhort and ask you earnestly to believe. You must check your faith every day and believe in the present tense, today. This is because people are imperfect and may not have believed perfectly. This is the reason I say it again and again.

The world seems as if it will last a long time, but one does not live long just because one wants to live long. If you read the Book of Revelation, it says that in the last days great wars and disasters will occur and many people will die at once. The world is going to become extremely difficult. So let us believe at this hour. All we have to do is believe. Dear fellow believers, you all believe, don't you? That is right. Let us live that way. As we live, there will be hard times, good times, and days when we eat

delicious food. We live serving the Lord, and when the Lord comes, we can follow Him, and if the Lord does not come, we can go to the Lord first. It is simple. Since we believe in Jesus, since we are believing anyway, we must believe and be born again. If one claims to believe but does not believe the true love of God, one becomes a person who opposes God, and that way is a curse. Later, even if one wants to turn back, one cannot. By all means, I hope that you will believe the true love of God and become those who are born again, those who believe to the end.



Sermon 2 by Paul C. Jong

Engrave the unchanging love of the Lord on your heart

< John 3:1-17 >

“There was a man of the Pharisees named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews. This man came to Jesus by night and said to Him, ‘Rabbi, we know that You are a teacher come from God; for no one can do these signs that You do unless God is with him.’ Jesus answered and said to him, ‘Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.’ Nicodemus said to Him, ‘How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter a second time into his mother’s womb and be born?’ Jesus answered, ‘Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Do not marvel that I said to you, “You must be born again.” The wind blows where it wishes, and you hear the sound of it, but cannot tell where it comes from and where it goes. So is everyone who is born of the Spirit.’ Nicodemus answered and said to Him, ‘How can these things be?’ Jesus answered and said to him, ‘Are you the teacher of Israel, and do not know these things? Most assuredly, I say to you, We speak what We know and testify what We have seen, and you do not receive Our witness. If I have told you earthly things and you do not believe, how will you believe if I tell you heavenly things? No one has ascended to heaven but He who came down from heaven, that is, the Son of Man who is in

heaven. And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life. For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved.’”

God loves us even now

It is good to see you. You have been working hard, and since it is the change of seasons, you must take care of your health. When the seasons change, many illnesses arise in the body and diseases go around. Our bodies need a lot of strength to adapt, so we must prepare well and keep our bodies warm. In our hearts, too, we must gain strength by thinking that the Lord will bless us and by looking forward to the warm season that is coming. It seems the winter has now completely passed. After the cold snap comes once or twice, the spring rain will come, the forsythia and the azaleas will bloom, and in a little while it will be the summer retreat. Before then, I know that we must diligently do the work of serving as the flower-calyx by faith. We are also preparing the church site. First we will contract for the land and pick it out, and when the money comes in later, we plan to build the building. Looking at the mission news, even in one week e-books and paper books have kept going out in the languages of many countries, and countless visitors have received books from the website. Also, many people overseas have sent in their testimonies. The overseas mission is proceeding without rest.

I am experiencing and also believing that God loves us, that

is, that in His heart there is a heart that loves us and that He loves us even now. Because God loves us, He takes care of things in due season, gives us wisdom, gives us health, opens a way for treatment when illness comes to the body, gives us the blessing of being able to do the work of God, and is with us in the things we do. The fact that God loves us is the greatest thing. It must be kept engraved on my heart and on your hearts that God has in His heart a heart that loves us. Even if we lose everything, the one fact that God loves you and me must never be forgotten.

“Unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God”

John 3:16 and 17 say this. *“For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved.”* It means that God had a heart that loves us, so He sent His Son, saved us from sin, kept us from being judged, and gave us eternal life. The love of God is so great and amazing. Nicodemus in the passage was a man of considerable standing, religiously a leader of Judaism and socially a ruler. But he knew Jesus as a teacher come from God. He himself was a teacher of the earth, a rabbi, but he knew Jesus as a teacher sent from heaven, so they were of a different rank. Because he knew and believed so, he came before that teacher wanting to learn, and confessed that no one could do these signs unless God was with him.

Then Jesus said to him, *“Unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.”* He spoke from the point of view: you say that I am the One who came down from heaven, but how

could you see that without being born again? Nicodemus gave an answer beside the point. How can I be born again now that I am old? Can I enter my mother's womb a second time and be born? Is that not an impossible story? So Jesus said, *"Unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit."* We testify what We have seen, but you are now speaking of earthly things. Nicodemus had heard all the rumors that Jesus raised the dead and healed the sick, and with that information he was saying that Jesus was a special person who came down from heaven. But Jesus, saying, *"If I have told you earthly things and you do not believe, how will you believe if I tell you heavenly things?"* speaks of the main point of His coming to this earth.

"As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness"

Let us look at verses 14 to 16 of the passage. *"As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life. 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."* This is the passage where Jesus speaks of His own love: that He loves all mankind, that He makes you and me born again and makes us children of God, and that He keeps us from receiving the judgment for our sins. Moses lifting up the serpent in the wilderness is an event in the Old Testament. Because the people of Israel in the wilderness complained against God, God sent fiery serpents and had them bite the people. Their whole bodies swelled up and they were dying, and Moses prayed earnestly for God to forgive this people

and to let them live. Then God told him to hang a bronze serpent on a pole and lift it up high, and to say that everyone who looks at it shall live. Moses did as he was told, and those who looked lived. On the basis of that event, Jesus said, *“Even so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life.”*

Let us look at Genesis 3:15. *“And I will put enmity Between you and the woman, And between your seed and her Seed; He shall bruise your head, And you shall bruise His heel.”* Who came as the Seed of the woman? Jesus Christ came to this earth as the Savior of you and me, borrowing the body of Mary. The Seed of the woman shall bruise your head—that is, He will crush the head of the devil.

What do the words *“you shall bruise His heel”* mean? It is a prophecy that Satan the devil enticed people to commit sin, and that because of that sin, Jesus would receive all the sins of mankind passed on to Him through His baptism and be hung on the Cross. Just as Moses tied the serpent to a pole and lifted it up high in the wilderness, Jesus, too, received the sins of mankind passed on to Him once and for all by being baptized by John the Baptist, and was hung high on the Cross. Because He took charge of the sins of mankind, the Lord was nailed to the Cross and received that curse. He received the curse while bearing the sins of you and me. Everyone who believes this fact obtains eternal life. In the end, what do these words speak of? They speak of the love of God. God not only has a heart that loves you and me, but He also put that love into practice. And even after saving us, He still sends the Holy Spirit, dwells in our hearts, and helps and loves us.

We live because of the love of God

Verse 8 of the passage says this. *“The wind blows where it wishes, and you hear the sound of it, but cannot tell where it comes from and where it goes. So is everyone who is born of the Spirit.”* That the wind blows where it wishes means that God saves all whom He wants to save. If you look at the natural world, the wind seems to blow as it pleases, but it blows within the range God permits. A while ago there was talk that sunspots exploded and a solar wind was blowing in, and that it could collide with the electric field surrounding the earth and cause confusion in communications. The earth revolves around the sun, and it is said that if it were a little closer we would burn to death, and if a little farther we would freeze to death. God has calculated gravity and all of space and is turning this galaxy. That the wind blows where it wishes means that He Himself rules. Our being born again, God’s loving us, and His saving us from sin—He Himself does them. In order to make us born again, He sent His Son to this earth, had that Son be baptized by John and be hung on the Cross, and thereby loved and saved you and me.

Dear fellow believers, the world that God loved in John 3:16 refers to you and me. Because God had a heart that loves us, He sent His Son, and through that Son He saved you and me with the gospel of the water and the Spirit, kept us from being judged, and let us obtain eternal life. Just as God said that He is with us always, even to the end of the age, we must know and believe the fact that He loves us unchangingly. If this fact is not in our hearts and we live only by what is visible to the eye, it is too empty and too hard. Today, too, we are living and breathing. We sleep, get up, and work, and even when we sleep, we breathe and live. The very fact that we live like this is because of the love of

God. That God gave us eternal life means that God loves us forever. Because God loves us, we exist. If God had not loved us, we could only die and could only be cursed. Because God loved us, we exist, we have received the remission of sin, we live forever, we do not receive the judgment for sin, and Jesus Christ received the judgment in our place. We must swim in that love, play in that love, and live by faith in that love.

Our working, too, is working because of the love of God, and our living, too, is living because of that love. Even if illness comes to the body, we must believe that since God loves me, He will heal me, and that even if He takes me, He will take me in order to do me good, and we must remain in that love at all times. This visible world of reality is here for a while and then disappears. Material things are nothing, either. What remains is the fact that God has in His heart a heart that loves us. If we know this fact, we will never despair.

Dear fellow believers, building a house and buying land are not great things, either. Someone said that if you get a haircut you are happy for a day, if you buy a car you are happy for a month, and if you buy a house you are happy for a year. It means that after a year or two it all grows stale. How many years does even love between a man and a woman, which works through hormones, last? They say it lasts five years at most. Then what love will one have after five years? One must have agape love, the love that is in God. Countless people come to grief by having only hormonal love. Suppose we build a building of two thousand pyeong. Even at only one million won per pyeong, it comes to two billion won, far more than the price of the land. Would you be satisfied once two thousand pyeong were built? Even if something like a great mansion of the world were built, I am not satisfied with a big house. That God has in His heart a heart that loves me is far greater to me than any material blessing.

If a house is large, it is hard to maintain and only costs a lot. If one has much property, it is hard to manage. That is why the Lord called us stewards. It means a person who keeps and manages what has been entrusted to him.

What do you and I actually live by? We live by love. Because of that love—that God has in His heart a heart that loves you and me and loves us forever—we are living. What does a person live by? A person lives because of the love of God. Without the love of God, whether one has much or little, whether one is sick or healthy, it is nothing. I think that even if the whole of our country were my land, compared with the love of God it would be less than dust. Does a person live just because he has money? Money is something one cannot do without, but one does not live just because one has money. One lives because there is love, and in the midst of love the necessary things must be there, too. Without love, one is nothing—a monster and a devil. Because He has a heart that loves us and loves us forever, you and I are at ease. Because He is with us, blesses us, and will take responsibility for our future, we have no worries.

Nicodemus, too, was born again through the ministry of the water and the Spirit

How were you and I born again? We were born again because of the love of God. Because God has a heart that loves us, when we fell into sin and came to be judged, He Himself was born on this earth through the body of Mary, putting on a human body, in order to save us. And when He became thirty years old, He was baptized by John the Baptist, the representative of mankind, and took charge of the sins of you and me, and He was hung on the Cross and received the curse and judgment for sin.

He received the judgment according to the law of the justice of God that the wages of sin is death, and so saved you and me from judgment, curse, and destruction. And He gives us His love forever. How could Nicodemus be born again? He was born again through that work Jesus came to this earth and did for us, this ministry of the water and the Spirit that we know. When He taught this fact, made it known, and made him believe it—when Nicodemus believed—he was born again.

Nicodemus later came forward in sorrow after Jesus was hung on the Cross and died. When everyone was avoiding the One who had been hung on the Cross, Joseph of Arimathea asked Pilate for the body of Jesus and laid Him in a stone tomb he had dug for himself. Nicodemus, too, came with myrrh and aloes and took part in the burial together with him. He did it because he believed. As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up; God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son—through this word he believed. Because God loves us, Jesus put on a human body and came to this earth, was baptized by John the Baptist in order to receive the judgment for our sins, was hung on the Cross and received the judgment, and died and rose again and became the eternal Savior of you and me. That Lord is now with you and me as the Holy Spirit, as the word of God. He is coming again. He will come again to this earth and take us.

Dear fellow believers, what must we saints who have been born again through the gospel of the water and the Spirit live by? We must live by the faith that believes that God loves you and me, and that He has that loving heart forever. I hope that you will know that fact and live by faith. ☒

Sermon 3 by Paul C. Jong

Only the water, the blood, and the Spirit are the truth of being born again

< John 3:1-18 >

“There was a man of the Pharisees named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews. This man came to Jesus by night and said to Him, ‘Rabbi, we know that You are a teacher come from God; for no one can do these signs that You do unless God is with him.’ Jesus answered and said to him, ‘Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.’ Nicodemus said to Him, ‘How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter a second time into his mother’s womb and be born?’ Jesus answered, ‘Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Do not marvel that I said to you, “You must be born again.” The wind blows where it wishes, and you hear the sound of it, but cannot tell where it comes from and where it goes. So is everyone who is born of the Spirit.’ Nicodemus answered and said to Him, ‘How can these things be?’ Jesus answered and said to him, ‘Are you the teacher of Israel, and do not know these things? Most assuredly, I say to you, We speak what We know and testify what We have seen, and you do not receive Our witness. If I have told you earthly things and you do not believe, how will you believe if I tell you

heavenly things? No one has ascended to heaven but He who came down from heaven, that is, the Son of Man who is in heaven. And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life. For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved. He who believes in Him is not condemned; but he who does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.”

The frustrating Nicodemus and the question of being born again

Christmas is not far off. In John chapter 3, which we read today, a man named Nicodemus appears. This man was a ruler of the Jews and a religious leader who was called a teacher in the nation of Israel. This man came to Jesus and had a conversation, and when we see him giving answers beside the point to the words of Jesus, it is truly frustrating. Yet Nicodemus was fundamentally not a man who opposed Jesus, but a man who respected, loved, and tried to follow Jesus. So it is all the more frustrating. He came to Jesus and praised Him, saying that no one could do these signs that He did unless God was with him. Because he had heard many rumors about Jesus, it was a remark he made thinking, in his own way, that he was exalting Jesus. But Jesus said to him, *“Unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.”* Then he asked in return. How can a person be born again when he is old? Can he enter his mother’s womb

a second time and come out?

Jesus spoke. *“Unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Do not marvel that I said to you, ‘You must be born again.’”* (John 3:5–7). It is the word that you must be born twice in order to be able to see the kingdom of God and to be able to understand what I say about the kingdom of God. He said, are you the teacher of Israel and do not know these things? We speak what We know and testify what We have seen; *“If I have told you earthly things and you do not believe, how will you believe if I tell you heavenly things?”* And He speaks about Himself. No one has ascended to heaven but He who came down from heaven and went up to heaven again, the Son of Man—that is, none but He Himself, who came to this earth putting on a human body. And then He spoke, citing an event of the Old Testament. As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up; everyone who believes in Me receives the remission of sin and obtains eternal life, He said. The key here is how a person can be born again. This is exactly where the interest of Nicodemus lay.

“For God so loved the world”

The words that as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up, mean that Jesus had to be killed. It is the word that Jesus takes charge of the sins of mankind, dies on the Cross, rises again, and goes up to the kingdom of God, and so saves all mankind from sin. Then everyone who believes in that work Jesus did obtains salvation and obtains eternal life. Let us look at verses 16 to 18 of the

passage. *“For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved. He who believes in Him is not condemned; but he who does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.”* How are we born again? With this word God is telling us the way we can be born again. God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, His one and only Son, to this world. It is the word that He gave His own Son, so that whoever believes in the work that the Son did is born again, receives the remission of sin, is born anew, and is made a child of the kingdom of God and taken there.

I take it that you and I, as we read this word, understand and interpret all the words. But Nicodemus could not know it even though he saw Jesus right before his eyes. Jesus was speaking right in front of him, and though he heard those words with his own ears, he did not understand their meaning. It is the appointed order that a person is born once and dies once, and after that there is judgment. All people have sin and were to go to hell, but He has removed the sins of all those people. It is the word that He was born on this earth, and at the age of thirty He was baptized by John the Baptist and took charge of the sins of mankind once and for all, and He bore all those sins and was hung on the Cross, and He died and rose again and goes up before God the Father. Therefore, He said that all people can be born again by believing in that Jesus.

It is so even when seen objectively. God the Father sent His own Son to this earth and intended to remove all the sins of all sinners. His Son was baptized by John the Baptist in the Jordan River in order to remove all the sins of this world. Jesus took

charge of the sins of mankind once and for all, was hung on the Cross, and rose from the dead, and gave salvation to everyone who believes. This very work is the only work the Lord came to this world and did. Jesus' being baptized was in order to take charge of the sins of you and me, and in order to save you and me from sin. That work was the very work for you and me.

Being born again, in which we die with the Lord and rise with Him

Our Lord, in order to save you and me, who were born once and had to die once because of sin, from sin and judgment, was baptized by John the Baptist in the Jordan River and took charge of all those sins. And in place of you and me, He gave up His body on the Cross, was nailed through both hands and both feet, poured out all His blood, and was put to death. And He died and rose again and became the Savior of you and me. If we believe that work the Lord did for us, we die once with the Lord and rise again with the Lord. Only then are we born again, born twice. That we die once by believing in the Lord and live once more and are born again—this very thing is being born again.

No one can be born twice by himself, no matter what effort he makes and what price he pays. Once one dies, that is the end, and after that one comes to receive the judgment for one's own sins before the Judge. That is why a person has only one chance. Life is not a play, so there is no raising the curtain again. Once it has passed, it is over. That is why He said that a person must be born again. To be born again, the water and the Spirit are needed. The Spirit is God, and the Son of God the Father came to this earth, was baptized by John the Baptist, took charge of our sins, and died in our place. By believing in that work in

which our Savior came to this earth, took charge of the sins of you and me, and received death and judgment in our place, we die once with the Lord, and just as the Lord rose again, we, too, obtain new life once more. Only by believing in that Savior who removed all our sins with the gospel of the water and the Spirit and rose again and gave us new life can we obtain the second life.

Religious people do not understand

But religious people do not understand this word of the Lord. The Lord came to this earth and always fought spiritual battles with religious people. Nicodemus, too, was a religious person just like the Pharisees. Talking with a religious person is frustrating. Jesus says to Nicodemus: are you not the teacher of the nation of Israel, are you not a religious leader, a man in high office, one who teaches and leads the people—then why do you not understand what I say? It is the word that it is because you have not been born again, because you have not been born twice.

Whether a person is in Christianity or in Buddhism, everyone who is not born again is a religious person. A while ago, two Buddhist monks who had been famous in our country passed away. One of them said as he died not to make his tomb too luxurious, and the other said that he had deceived countless people. These two did not know the being born again that the Bible speaks of. Not knowing about being born twice, they struggled in vain and died. They knew only about being born once. The religious people of today, too, do not know even as they read this Bible. A word like John 3:16 is a word that everyone can recite. But they do not know what it means that God so loved the world. It means that God the Father sent His

own Son to this earth, had His own Son be baptized by John the Baptist, and passed all the sins of this world on to His own Son. It means that His own Son, who received the sins of mankind passed on to Him, received the judgment for those sins on the Cross in our place and died, and rose again from the dead and saved us human beings.

The central figure of this word is God the Father. God the Father so loved us human beings that He gave His own Son to us, passed the sins of mankind on to His own Son, brought down the judgment for those sins on His own Son, and raised His own Son, who had died, and made Him the Savior of us human beings. Because His own Son completed that salvation, anyone who believes in His Son can be born twice. By dying once to sin and believing in Jesus, who rose again, as the Savior, we, too, live again, obtain the second new life, and can live forever. This way of salvation is the plan God the Father established in order to save us human beings. You and I were born sinners from birth and were people who had to be judged once without fail and go to hell forever. That is why God the Father had pity on our human lives and accomplished this work of salvation.

The gradual salvation made by man is not the truth

Dear fellow believers, you must escape from religion. Religion is something human beings have made. What human beings have made is religion, and faith is looking up to what God has done. That is why born-again people of faith always collide with religious people. Religious people do their deeds with the vague thought that if they do good there will be some reward, and then they die bearing their sins and go to hell. But we people

of faith, though we are people who would go to hell because of our sins, believe in Jesus, who came to this earth to save us, and in what He did.

Much of the Christianity all over the world today is also made by human beings. Originally Jesus saved mankind with the gospel of the water and the Spirit and Himself became the way to the kingdom of heaven, but human beings did away with that truth and made their own doctrines. They say that since Jesus saved us once and for all with the blood of the Cross, one is saved just by believing in that blood. But since one keeps sinning as one lives, they say that one is washed of the sins committed each day by offering prayers of repentance every day. They say that as one lives that way and grows old, the number of times one sins decreases and one is gradually changed into a holy person, and that at death one becomes a person completely without sin and goes to heaven. These are words that human beings have made. Buddhism speaks the same way, and every religion says the same thing. The salvation made by human beings is a gradual salvation. It is that one adds and adds and piles up merit upon merit and finally goes to heaven. It is a thought that came out of the human head, not the truth. True salvation is the salvation of the water and the Spirit that Jesus accomplished for us. God the Father planned it, and His Son was baptized by the representative of mankind and took charge of the sins of mankind, was nailed to the Cross and died, and rose again and fulfilled all that plan, and so saved us.

In the end, Nicodemus realized the word that as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up. He understood that the Savior came to this earth, took charge of the sins of mankind with His baptism, was nailed to the Cross and died, and having died, rose again, and saves mankind. So when Jesus was hung on the Cross and died, Jesus

was buried in the tomb of a rich man. The prophecy of the Old Testament that His grave would be with the rich was fulfilled. Nicodemus, too, came with myrrh and aloes and took part in that burial. Because he understood the words Jesus spoke, Nicodemus came to be born again. When he was in religion, he was not saved. But he understood the word of Jesus that one must be born again of water and the Spirit, and he believed in that water with which He took charge of sin through His baptism and in that work by which He saved us with the Cross and the resurrection, and so he was saved by being born again.

“With the heart one believes unto righteousness”

The Apostle Paul said in Romans that with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. Because we human beings were born with sin, no matter how many good deeds we do, we are sinners and must surely go to hell. Because a human being cannot save himself by his own deeds, the good God has saved us. God planned to save us, and He actually came to this earth and accomplished what He had planned. Therefore, by believing with the heart in that work by which He saved us, we obtain salvation. If one does not believe with the heart, one can never obtain salvation. To believe, there must be an object of faith, and He is none other than God, who made the universe, and that God saved us with the salvation of the water and the Spirit through His own Son.

By believing with the heart, we obtain the righteousness of God, become right persons, and become persons without sin. It is to confess with the mouth, “I believe that the Lord has removed all my sins with the water, the blood, and the Spirit; I

believe that Jesus has become my Savior.” Then God sees what we have believed with the heart and confessed with the mouth, and He confirms our salvation, saying, “You are My child, you have no sin; because you believe what My Son has done for you, you are one who has been saved and one who has obtained eternal life.” Believing or not believing is entirely a matter done in the heart. Believing is believing with the heart, not believing with deeds. From the faith of the heart, actions come out. Christianity is the way of faith, not a religion. What do we believe? We believe the fact that God the Father sent His own Son to this earth, had Him take charge of the sins of us human beings through His baptism, had Him die and be judged in our place on the Cross, and had Him die and rise again. When we know this fact, we can believe with the heart; if we do not know it, we cannot believe either.

It cannot be by deeds; it is only by faith

The person who does not believe this fact does not obtain salvation, and the person who believes obtains salvation. If one does not believe, it is destruction. This is because one cannot remove one's sins by oneself. Can you remove your sins by yourselves? You cannot. Therefore, only when Jesus removes the sins of you and me do those sins disappear. It is said that there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved. The name Jesus means Savior. Just as He prophesied in the Old Testament through the prophet Isaiah, “*The virgin shall conceive and bear a Son, and shall call His name Immanuel,*” God Himself came as the Savior of mankind. Even when He was a little child He was Jesus, that is, the Savior, and when He became thirty and was baptized, and when He was

hung on the Cross and died, He was Jesus. Jesus accomplished all the work of salvation for you and me, just as His name says, and went up to the side of God the Father. The sages of the world cannot be given the name of savior of mankind. They are merely ordinary human beings who tried harder than others morally.

Religious people keep trying to do something by their own deeds before God. They try to become holy people by building a great church building, giving many offerings, rising in office, living good lives, and offering many prayers of repentance. All those things belong to deeds; they are not believing. What belongs to deeds is entirely void if one does wrong once, even after doing well a thousand times. Look at David. David violated the wife of his own subordinate and committed the sin of adultery. Having committed the sin of adultery, he next had the commander of the army kill the husband of Bathsheba, committing the sin of murder. Next he bore false witness, and it amounted to having in his heart another god whom he loved more than God. When he violated one of the Ten Commandments, he came to violate all the rest. So it means that no matter how well one has done by deeds, if one commits sin only once in one's lifetime, one has committed all the rest of the sins, and so it is void. For us human beings, obtaining salvation has only one way: believing with the heart in what God the Father did for you and me through His own Son. Is there another way? There is not. There cannot be another way. For you and me to be saved from sin, there can be nothing other than believing in the heart the salvation of the water and the Spirit that the Lord accomplished.

Escape from religion

The One who saved you and me is God. Because it could not be done by a human being, could not be done by a created being, and could not be done even by an angel, only the Creator God saved you and me. It is because God loved you and me and wanted to live with us forever. That is why everyone must break free from religion. Whether one believes in Christianity or Buddhism or any religion, one must break free from the religion one now believes in. If one does not believe in the righteousness of the Lord, there is no way to obtain salvation. If one believes in the right work the Lord accomplished for us, that salvation, one comes to break free from religion. We must throw away religion even before we believe in the truth of the salvation of the water and the Spirit, and after we have believed, we must throw away wrong teachings as well. A person who still holds on to religious teachings even after believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit and receiving the remission of sin is a person who has not yet been saved.

Dear fellow believers, religion is a great tool that the devil uses. The devil keeps stirring up our hearts to do good deeds. Do good deeds, do even better deeds, he urges. But God says: no matter how many good deeds you do, you cannot be saved from your sins. Therefore, believe that My Son took charge of your sins, was nailed to the Cross and died in your place, and received all the judgment for sin. Then you will be saved. If only you believe as I have appointed, you obtain salvation, and to the one who believes I give eternal life. Just as God said, the one who believes has obtained salvation and obtained eternal life. I hope that you will all obtain salvation by faith. ☑

Sermon 4 by Paul C. Jong

Jesus Christ, the true Light

< John 3:16-21 >

“For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved. He who believes in Him is not condemned; but he who does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. And this is the condemnation, that the light has come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. For everyone practicing evil hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his deeds should be exposed. But he who does the truth comes to the light, that his deeds may be clearly seen, that they have been done in God.”

Have you eaten well? When people first met, in our country there was the lean season before the barley harvest and rice was scarce, so when they met, they greeted one another by asking whether one had eaten breakfast. Also, because people often died, they greeted one another by asking whether one had been well through the night. Perhaps because it has become a habit, I, too, always greet people by asking whether they have eaten well. Dear fellow believers, have you received the remission of sin? How good it would be if you had all received the remission of sin! Hoping that you all receive it, we have looked together at

the word we know well, from John 3:16 on. God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son, the only begotten Son, and made it so that whoever believes in that only begotten Son should not perish but have everlasting life. Dear fellow believers, receiving the remission of sin is very easy. All you have to do is believe in Jesus.

The gospel is easy, and the hinderers are many

Then why do people find it so hard to believe and so hard to understand? When you come to know it, it is so easy and so clear, but when there are hinderers, it becomes so difficult. Those who have been to the army and gone through a war know. When taking a certain hill, if there are no hinderers, one can just march straight up and plant the flag. It is a place plainly visible before one's eyes, reachable on foot in a few minutes, but because there are enemy troops hindering, taking that hill requires shedding much blood and paying many sacrifices.

This gospel, too, is really easy when you come to know it. Since it says that God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world but that the world might be saved, that world is none other than you and me. Jesus did not come to judge us; He came to save us, and He accomplished salvation. We only have to believe in that Jesus who saved us. Without any effort, we only have to believe. How easy is that? Then why can people not believe? They cannot believe because they have so many thoughts of their own. They cannot believe because they do not acknowledge the word of God. And it is because there is the hindrance of Satan the devil. If only there were no hindrance, it would be so easy.

Before this word comes the story of Nicodemus. Nicodemus

was a ruler of the Jews and a member of the council, a teacher and leader of considerable knowledge and wealth. This man respected Jesus so much that he came by night and said, “*We know that You are a teacher come from God.*” Jesus said that unless one is born again of water and the Spirit, one can neither see nor enter the kingdom of God, and that only when you are born again can you recognize that I have come down from heaven. Nicodemus was a man who had said he respected and believed in Jesus, but when Jesus spoke of being born again of water and the Spirit, he realized that there was something wrong with the faith he had held until then. So he became dumbfounded and asked whether one must enter one’s mother’s womb again and be born. His faith was shaken to the core.

This evening I want to speak to you about verse 21 of the passage, about the people who follow the light. “*But he who does the truth comes to the light, that his deeds may be clearly seen, that they have been done in God.*” Are we now following the light, or following darkness? Even while following darkness, if we only change direction toward the light, we can follow the light. If you know that you are darkness, do not put your hope in yourself, but look to the Lord, who is the true Light. You are not light, but that Light comes and makes you light. The Light is the gospel; it is none other than Jesus, who saved us. That Jesus has removed all our sins—that beautiful news is the Light.

Only when one’s own evil is exposed does one come to the light

Verse 20 of the passage says this. “*For everyone practicing evil hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his deeds should be exposed.*” Why does the one who practices evil not

follow the light? It is because he is worried that his evil deeds will be exposed. On an old poster there were the words, “Do not tremble in anxiety; turn yourself in and find the light,” and it is exactly like this word. Before a person becomes light, he must first acknowledge the word God has spoken to him. What does God say to us? He says that all people are sinners, born sinners from birth. He says that they are a brood of evildoers, corrupt children, people who cannot do good. He says that there is none who does good. One’s own evil must be exposed. A person is born with all twelve raw materials of sin, and commits this sin today and that sin tomorrow, going around in turn, so that he lives forgetting even what sins he commits. After going all the way around once, he does not even know what sins he has committed. Concerning the human heart, God says that the earth was without form and void, and darkness was on the face of the deep. It is the word that the very bottom of the heart is a lump of sin. That is why a person wants to do good but cannot, and does the evil he does not want to do. Sin sits deep inside, and that sin rises up.

Why do persimmons grow on a persimmon tree? Because its root is a persimmon tree, persimmons grow on its branches. When a persimmon tree is young, only pretty and fresh new shoots come up. But after a year or two, when it grows thick, flowers bloom in spring. You cannot imagine how pretty a persimmon flower is. Not showy but adorable, it blooms as if saying, “Peekaboo.” After the flowers fall, green persimmons the size of a gumball form in their place, grow and grow, and when autumn comes they ripen red and say, “I am a persimmon tree.” The following year, when the tree has grown thicker and its branches have spread further, however much it may wish, saying, “This year I do not want to bear persimmons; I will bear apples,” whether it wants to or not, it can only bear persimmons.

People are the same. Because they are a lump of sin, they commit sin. Committing the sins they do not want to and doing evil is because they were born sinners. But a person who wants to hide the dirty heart and dirty conduct inside him and live in hypocrisy does not come before the light. It is because he fears that his evil will be exposed. But the person who says, “I am an evil person, but whether I am exposed or disgraced, I want to become a person without sin, I want to become righteous, I want to receive the blessing God gives,” and who, braving his shame, acknowledges, “All the words of the Lord are right,” is the one who follows the truth and comes to the light. It is not that we become light by making an effort; the Light makes us, who are darkness itself, into light.

The true Light, the Light which gives light to every man

Let us look at John chapter 1 to see what the Light is. “*In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God*” (John 1:1). The Word is God. God is the God who is the Word. It says, “*He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made*” (John 1:2–3). Who is He? He is Jesus, who came to save us. The Creator who made us and the Savior who saved us is none other than Jesus. God did not appear in the form of God; He humbled Himself and appeared before us as the Savior who saves us. Dear fellow believers, do you believe that Jesus, who saved us, made this universe? If you follow your own thoughts, saying, “I did not see it with my own eyes, and the theory of evolution says otherwise, so what is going on?” you cannot believe. For following God there is nothing but this word

of the Bible. The word of the Bible is the measuring stick; it is the recorded word that God has spoken. This flower and that flower and all things in the universe exist because our Lord made them. Even if it does not make sense to my thinking, to follow, saying, “Since God has spoken, I believe”—it is from here that following the light begins.

“In Him was life, and the life was the light of men” (John 1:4). God formed man of the dust and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and he became a living being. The Master of life is none other than Jesus. But Adam and Eve, tempted by the serpent, broke the word that told them not to eat the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, and departed from the faith that believes the word of God. By departing from the word, since the wages of sin is death, they came to death. That is why a person must be born again. Having lost through sin the life he obtained once, he must now obtain new life again through the Lord. In the Bible, the Light speaks of Jesus Himself. In John chapter 8 He said, *“I am the light of the world. He who follows Me shall not walk in darkness, but have the light of life.”* And chapter 1 verse 9 says, *“That was the true Light which gives light to every man coming into the world.”* Because there are so many people and false gods in this world that claim to be the light, the Apostle John said, the true Light. The true God is Jesus, true love is Jesus, and the true Lord of salvation is Jesus. The real one is Jesus.

Only by believing and following the Light which gives light to every man, that is, the word that speaks to me personally, is one saved. One must not follow along wherever everyone else goes. God tells us both things. First, He says that you are evil sinners, and the wages of sin is death, so you are people who will go to hell. Second, He says that nevertheless, I have had pity on you and saved you; I have removed all your sins. We must accept

both of these words. Counting from the time the true Light came to this earth, it is now the year A.D. 2026. The history of this world is being counted from the time Jesus Christ came. But the world did not know Him, and He came to His own, and His own did not receive Him. But it says, “*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). What kind of person is the one who receives Him? It is the person who believes only the word of God and follows only the word. The person who believes and follows only the word, whatever anyone may say—only such a person receives the remission of sin and goes to heaven. The person who says that he believes the word but that the words of people are important too is tempted by Satan the devil, and even though he believes in Jesus, he ends up falling into destruction.

Our Lord has given us the perfect gift of salvation

Then how did that true Light become the Savior of each of us? Let us look at John 1:14. “*The Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.*” The Word is God, and that God, in order to save us, put on the same human flesh as ours and was born into this world, borrowing the body of a virgin named Mary. He was born in a small country village called Bethlehem in Israel, in a stable where animals were kept. According to the prophecy, “*Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a Son, and shall call His name Immanuel*”—that is, God is with us—the Lord had promised even before He came to this earth, and when the time came, He came to this earth. Matthew chapter 1 records this in detail. It says, “After Mary

was betrothed to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Spirit, and an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph, saying, she will bring forth a Son, and you shall call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins.” Mary, too, at first said, “How can this be, since I do not know a man?” but at the word that with God nothing is impossible, she obeyed, saying, “I am the maidservant of the Lord; let it be to me according to your word.” Why did He have to borrow the body of a virgin who did not know a man? Because after Adam and Eve sinned, the sins of all human beings were handed down by heredity. The Lord was not born with sin; He came putting on only the same blood and flesh as ours from the body of a virgin.

The Lord became lower than all created beings on this earth. In order to save us, He humbled His own form and experienced for Himself all of it—how weak we are, how evil we are, and how Satan the devil swarms about. Since He is God, He could have ended it with a single word, telling the devil or whatever it might be to vanish, but in order to save fairly and squarely, with justice, the human beings who had fallen into sin through the temptation of the serpent, He completely humbled Himself and took charge of our sins on His own body with the baptism He received from John. This is the glory of God. We praise the Lord not merely because He has power. He did not lie, He did not use the authority of being God carelessly, and He Himself carried out the law He had appointed, that the wages of sin is death. As for that suffering by which human beings had to die and go to hell, Jesus took charge of all the sins of mankind with the baptism He received from John and suffered the judgment, and so He saved us justly. That is why it says that He was full of grace and truth. Grace is a gift. Our Lord has given us the perfect gift of salvation, all of it. And truth is what is true. Because there

is not the slightest lie, there is nothing for which He could be accused even before Satan the devil, and the One who is without blemish before anyone is Jesus, our Savior.

We must follow the light of the truth

If Jesus came to save human beings from sin, He must first take charge of all our sins. That is why, when Jesus became thirty years old, He went to John the Baptist and was baptized. The word immersion means to be submerged in water, to be buried, and the word baptism means to be washed. This work has its origin in the Old Testament. God established in the Law that when a person sinned, he was to bring an unblemished lamb or goat before the priest of the tabernacle and lay his hands on the head of that offering. The word laying on of hands means passing on. When one lays hands on it, that person's sins pass on to the offering, and the throat of that animal is cut, and the priest takes the blood and puts it on the horns of the altar of burnt offering. This is because the life of the flesh is in the blood. Because God the Father loves people, He judged the offering in place of that person and saved that person. When you enter the tabernacle, the very first gateway is the altar of burnt offering. It means that anyone who has sin must pass through death to come before God. This system of sacrifice is the word God Himself promised on His side, saying, this is how I will save human beings in the days to come.

When we speak of following the light, you must not think that some flashing light appears. We must follow the light of the truth in the heart. Let us look at Matthew 3:15. *“Jesus answered and said to him, ‘Permit it to be so now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness.’”* To fulfill all righteousness

means to fulfill all right things. What are all the right things Jesus came to this earth and fulfilled? It is that He received all the sins of this world passed on to Himself, without leaving a single one. That work is the first work of the true gospel that saves us. Who is John the Baptist, who gave the baptism? He is the priest of mankind. Jesus went into the water of the Jordan River, and John the Baptist placed his hands on the head of Jesus as in the laying on of hands. Just as sins passed on to the offering when hands were laid on it in the Old Testament, at this time all the sins of mankind, all the sins of this world, passed on to Jesus. Why the Jordan River, of all places? The Jordan River is the river of death. Because the wages of sin is death and we had to perish because of sin, Jesus came to the river of death and there took charge of our sins with the baptism He received from John. The person who commits adultery all his life, the person who steals all his life, the person who lies all his life—in order to take charge of all those sins one by one, Jesus was baptized by John. The way God removes the sins of us human beings was this very way.

“The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world”

Let us look at John 1:29. *“The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, ‘Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!’”* It is the testimony of the day after he had baptized Jesus. We do not need to make any effort. We must stop our own thoughts and, holding our breath, quietly watch what God has done for us. If He saves us, we are saved, and if He fails in the work of saving, no matter how much we believe, we can only go to hell. As by one man’s sin all became sinners, so by one Man’s obedience all become righteous. So we

must look carefully at what our Lord has done for us. Dear fellow believers, we come out of our mother's womb inheriting sin. The sins committed from birth until the age of ten—are they the sin of the world, or not? They are the sin of the world. Then did Jesus take away those sins, or not? He took them away. When did He take them away? Even before we were born, already two thousand years ago, He took them away. What about the sins committed from the age of eleven to twenty-five? As one grows older, just as luscious fruit forms on a persimmon tree, a person begins to commit luscious sins. Those sins, too, are the sin of the world, and Jesus took them all away. However long one may live thanks to the advance of civilization, the sins committed in this world are all the sin of the world, and the Lord took them all away, having taken them all into account in advance.

Where are the sins of you and me now? They passed on to Jesus. If the sins that were in us have all passed on to Jesus, are those sins in us, or not? They are not. This is the gospel, and this is the Light. If you look at John chapter 19, Jesus, bearing His own cross, went out to Golgotha and was nailed to it. And knowing that all things were now accomplished, after He had received the sour wine, He said, "It is finished," and bowed His head and gave up His spirit. He accomplished all the work of removing our sins, the work of removing the sins of this world. Jesus Christ said, "It is finished," and died, and on the third day He rose again as He had promised, showed Himself to the twelve disciples and to over five hundred brethren, testified for forty days, and ascended. And He said that when He comes again, unlike the first time when He was born in a stable and accomplished salvation quietly in a small village, He will come majestically as the King of kings, as the Lord of judgment. Before meeting Jesus, who comes as the Lord of judgment, on

everyone who believes the fact that Jesus Christ has removed his sins—that Light—God bestows the grace of the remission of sin and salvation.

The passage speaks further. It says that everyone practicing evil hates the light and does not come to the light, and here practicing evil means not believing in the Light. Not accepting what the Lord did to save him—that is the most atrocious evil. I hope that you will not become such people. Jesus did not come to condemn the world; He came in order to remove our sins completely and to send to heaven the souls who believe in His merit. The Savior of you and me is none other than Jesus, who removed the sins of you and me. It is not a great man, nor an eloquent man, nor a doctrine. Our Lord, who left the throne of glory, came to this lowly earth, and took charge of all our sins—by believing in that Light, all people are saved.

The one who believes in the Light follows the Lord with thanksgiving

In the land of our country there are far too many fake Jesuses. There are many who pretend to be smarter than Jesus, many who make noise as if they themselves give salvation, and many who preach a false gospel. There are people who say they want to go and hear sermons under someone who speaks smoothly, as if his words were greased with sesame oil, but that attitude is not following the light. Following the light is going to a place where what the Lord did is delivered accurately, listening and learning, and believing and following what the Lord did and what is recorded in the word. Even if someone is said to have charisma or to be a peerless figure, whether pastor or layman, people are all the same. Because the words of people always change, they

are not the true truth, and because only what the Lord did is the true truth, I believe the truth. In order for Jesus to save us, in order to receive our sins passed on to Him, it was absolutely necessary for Him to be baptized by John. If Jesus had died on the Cross without being baptized, that death would be void. It would be void because it was not done according to the law and the rules. But our Lord, being full of grace and truth, spoke and fulfilled just as He had spoken. The first gateway to following this Light is the baptism Jesus received from John, and the person who does not pass through this gate can neither enter heaven, nor become a worker in it, nor receive and enjoy its blessings.

At first I did not understand either. Concerning the word that Jesus took away the sin of the world, I thought He had taken away only past sins. I could not understand how He could have taken away all the sin of the world when we commit so many sins as we live in this world, and how He could have taken away the sins of my children who were not even born yet. Dear fellow believers, it is possible because He is God. Because He is God, He removed the sin of this world once and for all, and made us perfect forever. We have not yet committed the sins we will commit tomorrow. Who knows what sins we will commit tomorrow? If someone steps on my foot while I am crossing the street and a quarrel breaks out, and we harbor hatred and come to blows, is that quarrel not sin, too, according to the law of God? Even that sin, because our Lord is God, He knew would happen and took away in advance. Our Lord accomplished everything once and for all. He did not do it little by little, progressively; He accomplished it all and removed all our sins.

But there is one thing we must remember. Because we are deficient in the flesh, we may commit sin again tomorrow. At that time, rather than saying, "I have sinned again, so I have

become a sinner again,” we must go forward with the faith that believes in that Light, saying, “Did the Lord not take charge of even this sin? Has the Lord not saved even such a deficient person as me? Thank You, Lord.” Our Lord has perfectly saved us so that the one who believes in the Light may escape from judgment with thanksgiving and continue to follow the right light. Therefore, the Apostle Paul said, “*Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, in everything give thanks,*” and he said in Second Corinthians that God has shone in our hearts the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. He took charge of sin once and for all. He who does the truth comes to the light; I hope that all of you who follow by faith what the Lord has done will receive the remission of sin and live in the true Light. ☒

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CHAPTER

4

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John Chapter 4 seen from the perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit

In John 4:1–26, in what way did Jesus testify about the gospel of salvation to the Samaritan woman?

In John 4:1–26, Jesus did not one-sidedly explain doctrine to the Samaritan woman. Jesus went to the woman first, and by starting a conversation with the everyday matter of water, He made her realize the thirst of her soul. Then He exposed the woman's sin, taught her about true worship and salvation, and revealed that He Himself was the Christ for whom that woman had been waiting.

The way Jesus preached the gospel proceeded in the following sequence.

Step	What Jesus did	The purpose of preaching the gospel
1	Went to Samaria	Went first to the sinner
2	Said, <i>"Give Me a drink"</i>	Naturally began the conversation from the other person's life
3	Spoke of the gift of God and the living water	Led from the need of the flesh to the need of the soul

Step	What Jesus did	The purpose of preaching the gospel
4	Said, “ <i>Call your husband, and come here</i> ”	Made the woman acknowledge her sin and her true self
5	Taught true worship	Led from religious places and forms to the truth of the gospel
6	Revealed, “ <i>I who speak to you am He</i> ”	Led to faith in Jesus as the Christ and the Savior

1. Jesus first went to the woman who needed to be saved

The text says that Jesus “*needed to go through Samaria.*” At that time there was a long-standing ethnic and religious conflict between the Jews and the Samaritans. But Jesus did not keep the Samaritans at a distance.

Moreover, Jesus talked directly with one woman. Jesus came to a sinner, going beyond ethnicity, gender, and social standing. This shows that salvation does not depend on a person’s qualifications or status, but begins from the grace of God, who comes to sinners.

It was not the Samaritan woman who came to Jesus first. Jesus was already at the well, and He first spoke to the woman who came there. In this way, Jesus is not One who only waits for sinners to come to Him; He is the Savior who comes first to lost souls.

2. Jesus began the conversation from the woman's everyday need

Jesus did not point out the woman's sin the moment He saw her. He first said, *"Give Me a drink."*

"A woman of Samaria came to draw water. Jesus said to her, 'Give Me a drink.'" (John 4:7).

The woman had come to draw water, and Jesus made that very water the starting point of the conversation. He started from an everyday matter that the woman could understand.

Jesus approached the woman as one asking her for help. As a result, the woman, though wary, began a conversation with Jesus. When we preach the gospel, too, it is important to look at the other person's life and circumstances and to start the conversation in such a way that the door of the heart can be opened.

We must lead the person to the gospel while understanding what worries that person has, why his heart is thirsty, and what he relies on as he lives.

3. He led her from the water of the flesh to the living water that gives life to the soul

When the woman began to converse with Jesus, Jesus soon spoke about the gift of God and the living water.

"Jesus answered and said to her, 'If you knew the gift of God, and who it is who says to you, 'Give Me a drink,' you would have asked Him, and He would have given you living water.'" (John 4:10).

Two important questions are contained in this word.

The first is, "What is the gift of God?" and the second is,

“Who is the one speaking to you now?”

The gift of God is the remission of sin and eternal life that Jesus Christ gives freely. And the One who gives that gift is Jesus Christ, who came as the Son of God and the Savior of mankind.

At first the woman understood the living water Jesus spoke of as the water of the flesh drawn from the well. But Jesus spoke by distinguishing the thirst of the flesh from the thirst of the soul.

“Jesus answered and said to her, ‘Whoever drinks of this water will thirst again, but whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him will never thirst. But the water that I shall give him will become in him a fountain of water springing up into everlasting life.’” (John 4:13–14).

Even if one drinks the water of the well, one thirsts again. The riches, success, pleasures, and human relationships of this world can also give satisfaction for a while, but they cannot solve the problem of the sin and death of the soul.

The living water Jesus gives is the gospel of salvation that washes away all the sins of a sinner and gives eternal life. With the baptism He received from John, Jesus took charge of all the sins of mankind, and bearing those sins, He was hung on the Cross, shed His blood and died, and He rose from the dead. When we believe this gospel of the water and the Spirit with the heart, we receive the remission of sin, the Holy Spirit, and eternal life.

This living water is not water that quenches thirst for a while from the outside; it becomes *“a fountain of water springing up into everlasting life”* in the heart of the one who believes. The Holy Spirit dwells in the heart of the person who has received the remission of sin and gives him the assurance of salvation, true peace, and eternal life.

4. He led the woman to acknowledge her sin and her true self

The woman, still understanding the meaning of the living water in a fleshly sense, asked Him to give her that water. Then Jesus suddenly turned the direction of the conversation to the matter of the woman's husband.

“Jesus said to her, ‘Go, call your husband, and come here.’ The woman answered and said, ‘I have no husband.’ Jesus said to her, ‘You have well said, “I have no husband,” for you have had five husbands, and the one whom you now have is not your husband; in that you spoke truly.’” (John 4:16–18).

To receive the living water, one must first know why one needs that living water. A person who does not acknowledge his sin does not seek the grace of the remission of sin either. That is why Jesus accurately exposed the life the woman had been hiding.

Jesus not only knew the woman's deeds but also knew the thirst in her heart. The woman had tried to find satisfaction through people and the things of the world, but she had not found true satisfaction. Through the matter of her husband, Jesus made the woman realize her own sin and the thirst of her soul that the things of the world could not fill.

The woman acknowledged her situation, saying, *“I have no husband.”* Jesus said, *“In that you spoke truly.”* In this way Jesus led the woman to acknowledge what she was before God.

When we preach the gospel, the purpose of speaking about sin is not to insult people or drive them to despair. It is to make a person realize before God that he is a sinner and a being who cannot solve his sin by himself, and to lead him to seek the salvation of Jesus Christ.

5. He led her to recognize Jesus as a prophet

The woman, having heard the words of Jesus, who knew all her circumstances, confessed as follows.

“The woman said to Him, ‘Sir, I perceive that You are a prophet.’” (John 4:19).

At first the woman saw Jesus merely as a Jewish man. As the conversation went on, she called Jesus “Sir,” and now she began to recognize Him as a prophet.

Jesus did not tell the woman all at once who He was; He made her realize it step by step through His words.

— At first she saw Him as a Jewish man.

— Next she looked to Him as One who could give living water.

— She acknowledged Him as a prophet who knew all about her life.

— Finally she came to know that He was the Messiah who was to come, that is, the Christ.

This is an important process in preaching the gospel. The one who preaches the gospel must not put himself forward, but must guide the other person to know, through the word, who Jesus is and what work of salvation He accomplished.

6. He led her from a religious dispute to the truth of salvation

After recognizing Jesus as a prophet, the woman asked about the place of worship. The Samaritans worshiped on Mount Gerizim, and the Jews insisted that one had to worship in Jerusalem.

“Jesus said to her, ‘Woman, believe Me, the hour is coming

when you will neither on this mountain, nor in Jerusalem, worship the Father. You worship what you do not know; we know what we worship, for salvation is of the Jews.’” (John 4:21–22).

The woman’s interest lay in the question, “In which place is it right to worship?” But Jesus did not let her remain in a dispute about places. True worship is not a matter of which mountain or temple one chooses; it begins from knowing the Christ whom God sent and believing the salvation He accomplished.

The words “*salvation is of the Jews*” mean that God sends the Christ through the tribe of Judah and the lineage of David, according to the promise of the Old Testament. Salvation does not come from religious traditions or disputes made by man; it comes from Jesus Christ, whom God sent.

Through the woman’s question, Jesus changed the matter of religion into the matter of the Savior. It means that before arguing about where one worships, one must know whom one believes in and what salvation one has received.

7. He taught the true worship offered with a heart that has received the remission of sin

“But the hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for the Father is seeking such to worship Him. God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth” (John 4:23–24).

Worship in spirit and truth is the worship offered, by faith in the truth of salvation, by a person who has received the remission of all sins by believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit and has received the Holy Spirit into his heart.

If sin remains as it is in a person’s heart, he cannot come

boldly before God. But when he believes the fact that Jesus took charge of all sins with the baptism He received from John and paid the price of those sins on the Cross, the sin of his heart is washed away. The Holy Spirit dwells in that cleansed heart and makes him worship, calling God Father.

Therefore, true worship comes about as follows.

— We know that Jesus is the Son of God and the Christ.

— We believe that Jesus took charge of all our sins with the baptism He received from John.

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

— We believe that Jesus rose from the dead and became the eternal Savior.

— We give thanks to God with a heart that has received the remission of sin and the Holy Spirit by believing this gospel.

Jesus led the Samaritan woman from the place of religious dispute to the place of believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit and worshipping truly.

8. Finally, He directly revealed that He was the Christ

The woman said that when the Messiah came, He would tell them all things. Then Jesus clearly revealed His identity.

“The woman said to Him, ‘I know that Messiah is coming’ (who is called Christ). ‘When He comes, He will tell us all things.’ Jesus said to her, ‘I who speak to you am He.’” (John 4:25–26).

The words *“I who speak to you am He”* are the conclusion of the gospel that Jesus preached to the Samaritan woman. What the woman needed was not a better husband, more convenient water, or a more authoritative place of worship. The One she

needed most was the Christ, who washes away all sins and gives eternal life.

Jesus did not let the woman keep waiting with only knowledge about the Christ. He made her know and believe that Jesus, standing right before her at that very moment, was the Christ.

Conclusion

Jesus testified about the gospel of salvation to the Samaritan woman in the following way.

First, He went first to the woman who needed to be saved. Second, He naturally began the conversation with the everyday subject of water. Third, through the thirst of the flesh He made her realize the thirst of the soul. Fourth, He promised the living water that is the gift of God, that is, the remission of sin and eternal life. Fifth, through the matter of her husband He made the woman acknowledge her sin and her true self. Sixth, going beyond religious places and disputes, He taught her the way of true worship. Seventh, He revealed that He Himself was the very Christ for whom the woman had been waiting.

Jesus accurately exposed the woman's sin and at the same time showed her the Savior who would solve that sin. Jesus Himself was the Christ who would take charge of all the sins of the world with the baptism He received from John, bear those sins and shed His blood and die on the Cross, and rise from the dead and complete salvation.

In the end, the method by which Jesus preached the gospel to the Samaritan woman was to make one person realize her own sin, acknowledge the thirst of the soul that the things of the world cannot fill, and believe with the heart in Jesus Christ, who washed away all sins with the gospel of the water and the Spirit.

What does the word of John 4:27–38 say?

John 4:27–38 is the word in which Jesus, who had preached the gospel to the Samaritan woman, teaches His disciples the meaning of spreading the gospel.

The Samaritan woman recognized Jesus as the Christ and ran to the people. Jesus said that preaching the word of salvation to one soul was His food, and He told His disciples to lift up their eyes, look at the souls that were already prepared, and reap the fruit of eternal life.

1. Jesus spoke to one soul, going beyond people's prejudices

“And at this point His disciples came, and they marveled that He talked with a woman; yet no one said, ‘What do You seek?’ or, ‘Why are You talking with her?’” (John 4:27).

The disciples marveled that Jesus was talking with the Samaritan woman. This was because at that time Jews did not have close fellowship with Samaritans, and it was also not common for a Jewish man to have a long conversation on the road with a woman he did not know.

But to Jesus, that woman was one soul who needed to be saved. Jesus did not treat people by the standard of ethnicity, gender, or social standing. Anyone who had sin in his heart and was spiritually thirsty was someone to whom Jesus would go and preach the word of salvation.

The disciples saw the outward conditions, but Jesus saw a soul that needed to be saved from sin.

2. The Samaritan woman testified to the Christ she had met

“The woman then left her waterpot, went her way into the city, and said to the men, ‘Come, see a Man who told me all things that I ever did. Could this be the Christ?’ Then they went out of the city and came to Him” (John 4:28–30).

As the Samaritan woman talked with Jesus, she realized the fact that He knew all her circumstances and her sins. At first she saw Jesus as a Jewish man, but as the conversation went on, she acknowledged Him as a prophet, and finally she recognized Him as the Christ who was to come.

That woman put making Jesus known to the people before the work of drawing water she had been doing. She did not explain complicated doctrines to the people.

She testified, *“Come, see a Man who told me all things that I ever did. Could this be the Christ?”* She led the people to Jesus by telling them exactly what she herself had heard and experienced.

What is important in the woman’s testimony is the words *“Come, see.”* She did not end with only herself believing; she had other people, too, come to Jesus and hear His word directly. As a result, the people of the town heard what the woman said and began to come to Jesus.

The woman sowed the seed of the gospel, and the people who heard her words came to Jesus. This is the beginning of preaching the gospel, in which one person, after accepting the gospel, preaches the gospel to still other people.

3. The food of Jesus was to accomplish the will of the Father

“In the meantime His disciples urged Him, saying, ‘Rabbi, eat.’ But He said to them, ‘I have food to eat of which you do not know.’ Therefore the disciples said to one another, ‘Has anyone brought Him anything to eat?’ Jesus said to them, ‘My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me, and to finish His work.’” (John 4:31–34).

Because the disciples had gone and gotten food, they urged Jesus to eat. But Jesus said that He had food of which the disciples did not know.

The disciples understood this word as the food of the flesh. But the food Jesus spoke of was to do the will of God the Father and to finish His work.

Jesus preached the gospel to the Samaritan woman and made her know and believe in the Christ. The work of going to a sinner, preaching the word of salvation, and enabling him to obtain eternal life was, to Jesus, the food that gave Him joy and satisfaction.

The food of Jesus does not end merely with preaching the word. The will of God the Father in sending Jesus to this earth was to save mankind from sin. In order to fulfill that will, Jesus did the following things.

— The Son of God put on a human body and came to this earth.

— With the baptism He received from John, He took charge of all the sins of mankind.

— Bearing the sin of the world, He was hung on the Cross, shed His blood, and died.

— He rose from the dead and gave new life and eternal life to those who believe.

Preaching the gospel to the Samaritan woman was the ministry of Jesus, who was carrying out God the Father's plan of salvation. Jesus obtained spiritual satisfaction and joy while doing the work of saving one soul.

4. “Finishing His work” refers to the completion of the work of salvation

Jesus said that finishing the work of the Father who sent Him was His food.

With the baptism He received from John, Jesus took charge of all the sins of the world once and for all. And bearing those sins, He went to the Cross and received the punishment of sin, and by rising from the dead, He completed the work of saving sinners.

Therefore, the work Jesus accomplished is not a matter of improving sinners a little morally. It is the perfect salvation in which He takes charge of all the sins of sinners in His own body, pays the price of those sins in their place, and gives new life to dead souls.

Jesus went to the Samaritan woman in order to give her this very salvation. For the woman to recognize Jesus as the Christ was to meet the One who would save her from all her sins.

Even today, a person hears through the word the work of salvation that Jesus accomplished, believes it with the heart, and receives the remission of sin. It is believing the word that Jesus took charge of all my sins with the baptism He received from John, received my judgment in my place on the Cross, and rose from the dead and became my Savior.

5. Jesus told His disciples to lift up their eyes and look at the souls

“Do you not say, ‘There are still four months and then comes the harvest’? Behold, I say to you, lift up your eyes and look at the fields, for they are already white for harvest!” (John 4:35).

In ordinary farming, one must wait several months after sowing the seed before one can harvest. But Jesus said that the spiritual harvest had already begun.

The people who had heard what the Samaritan woman said were coming out of the town to Jesus. While the disciples were thinking about food, Jesus was looking at the souls coming to be saved.

The words *“lift up your eyes and look at the fields”* mean that we should not remain only in the needs of the flesh and the circumstances before our eyes, but should look at the souls waiting for the gospel.

The disciples saw Samaria as a region the Jews avoided, but Jesus saw it as a harvest field where souls were ripening. The disciples saw the Samaritan woman as a person who was hard to talk with, but Jesus saw that through that woman the gospel would be spread to the whole town.

Seen with the eyes of the gospel, every person is a soul to be harvested. We must preach the gospel of the water and the Spirit to those who have sin in their hearts and have not obtained eternal life, and lead them to Jesus.

6. The harvest is gathering fruit for eternal life

“And he who reaps receives wages, and gathers fruit for eternal life, that both he who sows and he who reaps may rejoice together” (John 4:36).

The spiritual harvest is not gathering people into one's own church or one's own group. The harvest Jesus spoke of is gathering *“fruit for eternal life.”*

The person who hears the gospel of the water and the Spirit and believes with the heart the salvation Jesus accomplished receives the remission of all sins and obtains eternal life. The one who preaches the gospel is the harvester who reaps this very fruit of eternal life.

The fruit of preaching the gospel cannot be judged simply by many people gathering. The true fruit is a person hearing the word and coming to believe the following facts.

— I was a sinner before God.

— Jesus is the Son of God and my Savior.

— With the baptism He received from John, Jesus took charge of all my sins.

— Jesus received the judgment for my sins in my place on the Cross.

— Jesus rose from the dead and gave me new life and eternal life.

— By believing this gospel, I have received the remission of all the sins of my heart.

The person who has obtained this faith is the fruit of the kingdom of God, a fruit that lives forever. The one who preached the gospel rejoices, the one who heard the word and was saved rejoices, and God, who saved that soul, rejoices as well.

7. The one who sows and the one who reaps work together

“For in this the saying is true: ‘One sows and another reaps.’ I sent you to reap that for which you have not labored; others have labored, and you have entered into their labors” (John 4:37–38).

The work of the gospel is not something one person accomplishes alone. Some sow the seed of the word, others keep teaching that word, and still others reap the fruit of faith.

The prophets of the Old Testament prophesied about the Christ who was to come. John the Baptist prepared the way of the Lord and testified to Jesus as the Lamb of God. Jesus preached the word of salvation directly to the Samaritan woman, and that woman testified about Jesus to the people of the town. Now the disciples came to take part in that labor by preaching the gospel to the people coming to Jesus.

Therefore, one who preaches the gospel cannot think that he did everything alone. Before that person heard the gospel, he may already have heard the word from his family or from another evangelist, or he may have read the Bible or been seeking salvation through the hardships of his heart.

God saves one soul by linking together the labors of many people. The one who sowed the seed, the one who watered, and the one who reaped the fruit are all fellow workers who took part in God’s work of salvation. That is why the one who sows and the one who reaps rejoice together.

Important meanings shown in the text

Expression in the text	Spiritual meaning
The woman left her waterpot and went	Put making Jesus known to the people first
<i>“Come, see”</i>	Led the people not to herself but to Jesus
The food of Jesus	Doing the will of God the Father and saving souls
The fields white for harvest	Souls ready to hear the gospel and be saved
The harvest	Preaching the gospel of the water and the Spirit and saving souls
Fruit for eternal life	A person who has believed in the work of salvation of Jesus and received the remission of sin and eternal life
He who sows and he who reaps	God’s workers who serve the gospel together, though their times and roles differ

Conclusion

John 4:27–38 is the word that shows one soul, after being saved, leading other people to Jesus, and in which Jesus, having watched that, teaches His disciples the mission of spreading the gospel.

The Samaritan woman testified to the people about Jesus, whom she had met. The people who heard her words came to Jesus. Jesus said that preaching the word of salvation to sinners

and fully accomplishing the will of God the Father was His food.

And He told His disciples to lift up their eyes and look at the souls to be harvested. The harvest is preaching the gospel of the water and the Spirit so that people believe in the salvation of the baptism, the Cross, and the resurrection that Jesus accomplished and obtain eternal life.

Jesus completed the plan of salvation of God the Father by taking charge of all the sins of mankind with the baptism He received from John, receiving the judgment of those sins on the Cross, and rising from the dead. Preaching this gospel so that sinners receive the remission of sin and obtain eternal life is the spiritual harvest God has entrusted to the Church and the saints.

What does the word of John 4:43–54 say?

John 4:43–54 shows the process in which the nobleman goes forward from a faith that seeks visible signs to a faith that believes the very word of Jesus.

Jesus did not go down to Capernaum Himself, but said, “*Go your way; your son lives.*” The nobleman had not yet seen that his son was healed, but he believed the word of Jesus and went back. On his way home he heard the news that his son was living, and he confirmed the fact that the sickness had been healed at the very hour Jesus had spoken.

This sign shows the fact that the word of Jesus is the word of God that gives life, and that one obtains salvation and life by the faith that believes that word.

1. The Galileans who received Him because they saw signs

“Now after the two days He departed from there and went to Galilee. For Jesus Himself testified that a prophet has no honor in his own country. So when He came to Galilee, the Galileans received Him, having seen all the things He did in Jerusalem at the feast; for they also had gone to the feast” (John 4:43–45).

After staying two days in Samaria, Jesus went to Galilee. The Samaritans heard the word of Jesus directly and believed that He was indeed the Savior of the world. But the Galileans received Him because they had seen the signs Jesus did at the feast in Jerusalem.

The interest of the Galileans was focused more on what miracles He performed than on who Jesus was. Jesus knew the limits of such faith. Through signs Jesus revealed that He was the Son of God and the Lord of life, but He wanted people not to stop at the signs but to believe His word.

True faith does not end with being amazed at seeing a miracle. It must go forward to looking at Jesus, to whom the sign points, and accepting His word with the heart.

2. The nobleman came to Jesus with a problem he could not solve by his own strength

“So Jesus came again to Cana of Galilee where He had made the water wine. And there was a certain nobleman whose son was sick at Capernaum. When he heard that Jesus had come out of Judea into Galilee, he went to Him and implored Him to come down and heal his son, for he was at the point of death” (John 4:46–47).

The nobleman was a man of high position, but he could not

save his dying son. Power, wealth, and social position, too, could exert no strength at all in the face of death.

When he heard the news that Jesus had come to Galilee, he came to Him himself. And he implored Him to come down to Capernaum and heal his dying son.

This picture is connected with the process by which a sinner is saved. A person cannot solve the problem of sin and death with his own deeds, religious efforts, or the power of the world. When he realizes the fact that he has no ability to save himself, he comes to seek Jesus, the Lord of life.

The nobleman came to Jesus with a hopeless problem. His faith was not perfect from the beginning, but he at least knew the fact that he could not solve it by his own strength and sought help from Jesus.

3. Jesus pointed out the faith that believes only after first seeing a sign

“Then Jesus said to him, ‘Unless you people see signs and wonders, you will by no means believe.’ The nobleman said to Him, ‘Sir, come down before my child dies!’” (John 4:48–49).

The nobleman thought that Jesus had to come down to his house Himself and heal his son. He thought that the sickness would be healed only if Jesus came to the place, met his son, and touched him.

But Jesus said, *“Unless you people see signs and wonders, you will by no means believe.”* Here Jesus pointed out not just the one nobleman but also the faith of the Galileans, who demanded visible miracles first.

People commonly think as follows.

— If I see a miracle with my eyes, I will believe.

- If my circumstances get better first, I will believe in God.
- If my sickness is healed, I will believe in Jesus.
- If I have a special experience or feel deeply moved, I will be sure of salvation.

But Jesus wants people to believe the word of God first, rather than visible phenomena. True faith is not acknowledging a result after the result has appeared; it is believing the word because the One who spoke it is Jesus.

4. Jesus made the nobleman's son live with His word alone

“Jesus said to him, ‘Go your way; your son lives.’ So the man believed the word that Jesus spoke to him, and he went his way” (John 4:50).

Jesus did not go down to Capernaum with the nobleman. He gave him only the words *“Go your way; your son lives.”*

This one statement reveals the divinity of Jesus. Even without going Himself to the place where the sick child was, Jesus knew the condition of that child. The life and power of Jesus are not limited by distance and space.

Jesus is God, who created the heavens and the earth by His word. When He says *“lives,”* even a person who was dying comes to life. The word of Jesus is not a mere expression of comfort or hope; it is the word of God that comes to pass just as He has spoken.

The nobleman was placed before two choices. He could keep demanding that Jesus come down to his house, or he could believe the word of Jesus and go back. He *“believed the word that Jesus spoke to him”* and went back.

It was not that he believed after hearing the news that his son

was healed. He first believed the word of Jesus, and with that faith he set out for home. Faith was shown in action.

5. He first believed the word and then confirmed the fulfillment of the word

The faith of the nobleman developed as follows.

Process	The nobleman's conduct	The meaning of faith
Hears the news	Hears that Jesus has come to Galilee	Faith begins from hearing the word
Comes to Jesus	Implores Him for his dying son	Acknowledges his own inability and seeks the Lord
Demands a sign	Asks Jesus to come down Himself	Relies on a visible method
Believes the word	Believes the words " <i>your son lives</i> " and goes	Accepts the word before seeing the result
Confirms the fulfillment	Learns that his son was healed at the hour Jesus spoke	The word of Jesus comes to pass just as it was spoken
His whole household believes	He himself and his whole household believe in Jesus	The healing of the body leads to faith in Jesus

At first the nobleman believed in the power of Jesus to some degree, but he thought that Jesus had to go to his son Himself. But after receiving the word of Jesus, he laid down his own thoughts and methods and believed that word.

Faith is not placing one's own thoughts above the word of Jesus. It is exalting the word of Jesus above one's own thoughts and accepting that what that word says has come to pass, even when there is no visible evidence yet.

6. The hour the son was healed was the very hour Jesus spoke

“And as he was now going down, his servants met him and told him, saying, ‘Your son lives!’ Then he inquired of them the hour when he got better. And they said to him, ‘Yesterday at the seventh hour the fever left him.’ So the father knew that it was at the same hour in which Jesus said to him, ‘Your son lives.’ And he himself believed, and his whole household. This again is the second sign Jesus did when He had come out of Judea into Galilee” (John 4:51–54).

While the nobleman was going down to his house, his servants came and told him that his son was living. The nobleman asked the hour when his son's sickness began to improve. And he came to know the fact that the fever had left at the very hour Jesus had said, *“Your son lives.”*

This agreement of the hour shows the fact that the son did not recover by chance but was healed by the word of Jesus. Jesus made a sick person who was far away live with His word alone. Through this He revealed that He is the Lord of life and God who is the Word.

This sign did not affect the faith of the nobleman alone. It is

written, “*He himself believed, and his whole household.*” The word the father believed and the sign that came to pass according to that word led the whole family to Jesus.

When one person in a family believes the word of Jesus and testifies to that faith, that word can be conveyed to the other family members as well. The nobleman testified to his family the word of Jesus that he had heard, believed, and experienced, and his whole household came to believe in Jesus.

7. The word that made the body live also saves the soul from sin

The sign of making the nobleman’s son live shows that the word of Jesus is the power of salvation that makes souls dead in sin live.

Today we cannot directly see Jesus, who was on this earth in the flesh, but the work of salvation Jesus accomplished is recorded in the word of the Scriptures.

The Scriptures testify that Jesus came to this earth as the Son of God, took charge of all the sins of mankind with the baptism He received from John, bore those sins and shed His blood and died on the Cross, and completed salvation by rising from the dead.

The remission of sin, too, is received just as the nobleman believed the word of Jesus.

The nobleman did not believe the word of Jesus after first seeing that his son was healed. Because Jesus had said, “*Your son lives,*” he believed that word and went back.

In the same way, we must not wait for some special feeling or experience to arise in our hearts first, but must believe the word that testifies how Jesus removed our sins.

— I believe, because the word says that Jesus took charge of all my sins with the baptism He received from John.

— I believe, because Jesus bore my sins and was judged on the Cross.

— I believe, because Jesus rose from the dead and became my Savior.

— I believe, because God has given the remission of sin and eternal life to those who believe this gospel.

When we believe the word, the salvation Jesus accomplished becomes our own salvation. Sin is not removed by our own deeds and feelings; we obtain the remission of sin by accepting with the heart the word of the salvation Jesus accomplished.

8. The two signs at Cana show the authority of Jesus to create and to give life

The first sign He performed at Cana was turning water into wine. The second sign was making the nobleman's son, who was far away, live by His word.

The first sign shows that Jesus is the Creator, who changes the nature of matter. The second sign shows that the word of Jesus has the authority of life that makes the sick live.

Both signs testify that Jesus is not a mere prophet or a miracle worker, but God, who creates by His word and gives life.

Jesus turned water into wine, and He made a dying child live by His word. Moreover, with the baptism He received from John, the Cross, and the resurrection, He made sinners new as the sinless people of God.

Conclusion

John 4:43–54 shows a contrast between the people who would believe only after seeing signs and the nobleman who first believed the word of Jesus.

At first the nobleman thought that his son would be healed only if Jesus came down to his house Himself. But when Jesus said, “*Go your way; your son lives,*” he believed that word and went back, though he had not yet seen the result. And he confirmed the fact that his son had been healed at the very hour Jesus spoke.

Therefore, the core of what this text conveys is as follows.

— Jesus is God, who gives life by His word without being restricted by space.

— Signs reveal the divinity of Jesus and His authority to give life.

— True faith is believing the word of Jesus first, rather than visible results.

— The faith that believes the word of Jesus is shown in obedient action.

— The result of one person believing the word became the channel through which the gospel was conveyed to the whole family.

— Jesus, who made the body live by His word, also saves the souls of sinners with the gospel of the water and the Spirit.

Just as the nobleman believed the words “*your son lives*” and experienced the work of life, we obtain the remission of sin and eternal life by believing with the heart the word that Jesus removed all our sins with the baptism He received from John, the Cross, and the resurrection. ☒

Questions and Answers on John Chapter 4

[Question] 1. Examine the various aspects of Christ shown in John chapter 4 and explain their meaning.

In John chapter 4, the humanity and divinity of Jesus Christ and the work of salvation He accomplishes are shown in various aspects.

First, Jesus showed the aspect of a true man. The text records, *“Jesus therefore, being wearied from His journey, sat thus by the well.”* He grew tired as He walked along the way and was thirsty, so He asked the Samaritan woman for water. But He who asked for water was, on the contrary, the One who gives the living water with which one never thirsts again. That is, though He put on flesh and came close to man, He was the Lord of life who gives life to man’s soul.

Jesus was also the Savior who comes to sinners. He met a Samaritan woman—one of the people with whom the Jews had no dealings, and among them one who found it hard to stand openly before others. It was not that the woman sought the Lord first; the Lord sat and waited at the well where she would come to draw water. This shows that Jesus is not One who keeps His distance from sinners, but One who comes to meet and save sinners.

Christ is the prophet who knows everything about a person. The woman did not speak of her past, but Jesus knew all about her husbands and even her present situation. Therefore, the

woman confessed, *“Sir, I perceive that You are a prophet.”* Jesus is not One who sees only the outward appearance of a person; He is God, who knows everything—the past and the present, the sin of the heart, and even the thirst of the soul. He exposed her sin not in order to cast the woman away, but in order to give her living water and have her meet the true Savior.

Jesus is the Lord of life who gives living water. The Lord said, *“Whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him will never thirst. But the water that I shall give him will become in him a fountain of water springing up into everlasting life.”* The water, wealth, pleasures, and honor of this world can only quench the thirst of the flesh for a while; they cannot satisfy the soul. But the living water Jesus gives grants the remission of sin and eternal life, and by making the Holy Spirit dwell in the heart of the one who believes, it keeps him from ever again thirsting because of sin and judgment.

The *“living water”* Jesus spoke of is not something a person obtains by striving or by paying a price. When Jesus was baptized by John the Baptist, He had all the sins of mankind transferred to Him once and for all, and bearing those sins, He was hung on the Cross and received the judgment of sin, and He rose from the dead. Thereby the sin that was in our hearts was washed away, and the person who believes this fact receives the remission of sin and peace and becomes a child of God. Moreover, because the Holy Spirit dwells in his heart, he comes to enjoy eternal life and satisfaction, as if living water were springing up from within.

Jesus is the Messiah, that is, the Christ, who had been awaited. When the woman said that when the Messiah came, He would tell them all things, Jesus revealed, *“I who speak to you am He.”* Christ is the One who holds the offices of King, High Priest, and Prophet all at once. As King, He is God, who made

all things; as High Priest, He saves sinners with the gospel of the water and the Spirit; and as Prophet, He knows everything about a person and teaches the truth of salvation. Therefore, we must not know Jesus as a mere teacher or a miracle worker, but must know and believe in Him as the Christ, who is the Creator God and the Savior.

Jesus is God, who teaches true worship. The Samaritan woman asked on which mountain one ought to worship, but Jesus put an end to the dispute that was bound to places and said, *“God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth.”* True worship does not come about merely through a particular place or outward form. True worship is when a person who believes in Jesus Christ as God and the Savior and has received the remission of sin and the Holy Spirit reveres God with the heart and follows His word.

Jesus is the One who fully accomplishes the will of the Father. When the disciples urged Him to eat, the Lord said, *“My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me, and to finish His work.”* Preaching salvation to one soul and seeing the Samaritans come before the Lord through that woman was the Lord’s food. Jesus put the work of salvation entrusted to Him by the Father before His own comfort, and He found satisfaction in completing that work.

Jesus is the Lord who presides over the harvest of souls. When the Samaritan woman testified to the Christ, many people came to Jesus. At first they believed because of what the woman said, but afterward they heard the word of Jesus directly and confessed, *“We know that this is indeed the Christ, the Savior of the world.”* Jesus is not the Savior of the Jews only; He is the One who saves the Samaritans and the whole world. He is also the Lord of the harvest, who sees the field of souls that is already ripe and sends His disciples to gather fruit for eternal life.

Finally, Jesus is God who is the Word, who gives life with His word alone. When the nobleman implored Him to heal his dying son, Jesus did not go down to that house but said, “*Go your way; your son lives.*” When the nobleman believed that word and went back, he found that his son had been healed at the very hour Jesus had spoken. This shows that the word of Jesus is not a mere comfort or promise, but the word of the Creator that gives life and changes reality.

In this way, the Jesus of John chapter 4 is God, who gives the living water of eternal life; He is the prophet who knows all about the hidden life of one woman, and He is the Savior of the whole world. The faith this chapter requires is not a faith that stops at knowing Jesus as a mere performer of miracles, but a faith that knows and accepts Him as God who came to me, the Christ, the Lord of life, and the Savior of the world.

[Question] 2. In John chapter 4 verse 2, who administered baptism in the early period of the New Testament era?

When the gospel of the New Testament was beginning, those who administered baptism with water were John the Baptist and the disciples of Jesus.

John the Baptist came before Jesus, crying out to the people to repent and administering baptism. After Jesus began His public ministry, not only John the Baptist but also the disciples of Jesus administered baptism. John chapter 3 records that Jesus stayed with His disciples in the land of Judea and baptized, but John chapter 4 verse 2 makes this clear as follows.

“Though Jesus Himself did not baptize, but His disciples” (John 4:2).

Therefore, the baptism administered on Jesus' side was carried out under the will and authority of Jesus, but those who actually administered the baptism were the disciples of Jesus. Those who administered baptism in this period were John the Baptist and the disciples of Jesus.

After Jesus rose again, this work was entrusted to the disciples as a clear command.

“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” (Matthew 28:19).

Accordingly, baptism in the early New Testament era was not a rite that just anyone performed according to his own will; it was administered by John the Baptist, who was sent by God, and by the disciples, who were commissioned by Jesus Christ.

[Question] 3. In John chapter 4 verse 4, through what historical process was Samaria formed?

Samaria was at first the name of a city. King Omri bought the hill of Samaria from Shemer, built a city, and called its name Samaria, and this place later became the capital of the northern kingdom of Israel.

After Israel was divided into north and south, the northern kingdom departed, through Jeroboam, from the order of worship God had established. In the end, Assyria captured Samaria and carried the people of Israel away captive, and it moved people from various regions into the cities of Samaria. These people feared the LORD, yet they also served the gods of their own nations. Thus people of mixed blood and mixed faith came to settle in Samaria, and the Jews despised them.

Moreover, the Samaritans made Mount Gerizim the center of

their worship, whereas the Jews insisted that one had to worship in Jerusalem. Because religious conflict was thus added to ethnic feeling, the Bible records, “*Jews have no dealings with Samaritans*” (John 4:9).

Therefore, the words “*He needed to go through Samaria*” (John 4:4) do not mean merely a geographical movement. They also contain the meaning that Jesus intended to enter the land the Jews avoided, cross the long-standing ethnic and religious barrier, meet the Samaritan woman, and bestow the grace of salvation.

[Question] 4. In John chapter 4 verse 4, examine the meaning of Christ passing without hesitation through Samaria, which had a dark history.

At that time the Jews regarded the Samaritans as a people mixed with Gentiles and despised them. Religiously, too, there was a deep conflict between the Samaritans, who centered their worship on Mount Gerizim, and the Jews, who centered their worship on Jerusalem. That is why the Bible also records, “*Jews have no dealings with Samaritans*” (John 4:9).

But Christ did not follow such ethnic prejudice and religious barriers. He could have gone to Galilee bypassing Samaria, but He deliberately entered that region in order to meet a woman who lived in Sychar. Accordingly, the words “*He needed to go through Samaria*” (John 4:4) do not simply mean that He had no choice but to pass along that road. It was a necessary step that came from the will of the Lord to seek out the woman who was thirsting because of sin and bestow on her the grace of salvation.

That Christ paid no regard to the past of Samaria does not mean that He condoned their sin and wrong faith. The Lord

exposed the woman's sin and also corrected the problem of wrong worship. But He did not condemn and cast the woman away because of that past; He wanted to make her know that He was the Messiah and to give her the living water with which one never thirsts again. Jesus went to that woman as the Savior who would take upon Himself the sin of mankind with His baptism and receive the judgment of that sin on the Cross.

As a result, the Samaritan woman believed in the Christ and told the people of the town about Him. Many Samaritans heard the word of Jesus and believed, and finally they confessed, "*We know that this is indeed the Christ, the Savior of the world*" (John 4:42). In this way, the Lord does not make a person's lineage, past, or the contempt received from people an obstacle to salvation. Christ is the One who does not pass by sinners like the Samaritan woman, but goes to them Himself and bestows the grace of salvation.

[Question] 5. Explain the method and principles of preaching the gospel shown by Jesus Christ in John chapter 4 verses 7–26.

The way Jesus Christ preached the gospel begins with first going into the circumstances of the other person. Though the Jews had no dealings with the Samaritans, Jesus was not bound by that barrier and first said to the Samaritan woman, "*Give Me a drink.*" He did not take the attitude of teaching or condemning one-sidedly; He naturally began a conversation from the place in life where the woman was. When we preach the gospel, too, we must look at the other person's circumstances and difficulties and first build a relationship in which we can hear what he has to say.

Starting from the everyday subject of well water, Jesus led the conversation to the matter of living water and eternal life. His saying, *“If you knew the gift of God, and who it is who says to you, ‘Give Me a drink,’”* was a word meant to make the woman think about the gift of God and who the One giving that gift was. In this way, preaching the gospel must start from a person’s real needs and thirst, but must not stay there; it must go on to the thirst of the soul and the matter of eternal life.

Moreover, when the woman asked for the living water, Jesus said, *“Go, call your husband, and come here.”* This was not to dig up the woman’s sin needlessly and shame her; it was to make her realize her true self and know that she was a sinner who needed a Savior. In preaching the gospel, the problem of sin cannot be avoided. But the purpose of pointing out sin lies not in condemning a person, but in leading him to Christ, who took upon Himself that sin and removed it.

When the woman asked where one ought to worship, on Mount Gerizim or in Jerusalem, Jesus did not remain in a religious dispute about places. He said that because God is Spirit, one must worship in spirit and truth, and He taught the essence of true worship and salvation. Preaching the gospel is not winning an argument with denominational or religious claims; it is leading a person to know God and Christ rightly and believe.

Finally, concerning the Messiah the woman had been waiting for, Jesus clearly revealed, *“I who speak to you am He.”* The way Jesus preached the gospel does not end with vague religious lessons; it always goes on to Christ Himself. We must preach the fact that Jesus took upon Himself the sin of mankind by being baptized, received the judgment of that sin on the Cross, and rose again and became the Savior.

Therefore, the principle of preaching the gospel shown in this chapter is to know the other person’s circumstances and draw

near, to lead the conversation from real-life problems to the problem of the soul, to make him realize his sin, and then, going beyond religious disputes, to tell clearly of Christ and His salvation. A person's eloquence or wisdom does not produce faith. Human relationships can be a channel that leads a person to the word, but what actually brings a person to salvation is the word that Christ spoke.

[Question] 6. In John chapter 4 verse 10, explain the meaning contained in “the gift of God” and in “living water” respectively.

“*The gift of God*” means the grace of salvation that God bestows freely on sinners. It is not something a person obtains by his own deeds or efforts; it is a gift received by believing in what Jesus Christ accomplished. Jesus took upon Himself the sin of mankind by being baptized by John the Baptist, received the judgment of that sin on the Cross, and rose from the dead and became the Savior. The person who believes this fact receives the remission of sin, is born again, becomes a child of God, and obtains eternal life. All this salvation is the gift that God gives.

“*Living water*” refers to the remission of sin and the eternal life that Jesus gives, and to the Holy Spirit who comes upon the heart of the person who believes in that salvation. Jesus said, “*The water that I shall give him will become in him a fountain of water springing up into everlasting life,*” and in John chapter 7, concerning the rivers of living water, it is made clear, “*This He spoke concerning the Spirit, whom those believing in Him would receive.*”

Therefore, the living water is not water that quenches the thirst of the flesh for a while. It means that the Holy Spirit dwells

in the person who has received the remission of sin by believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit that Jesus Christ accomplished, and that the word and grace of salvation keep springing up. That person escapes the thirst of the soul he suffered because of sin, and comes to enjoy eternal life, peace, and true satisfaction.

To sum up, *“the gift of God”* refers to the whole salvation that Jesus Christ gives freely, and *“living water”* refers to the Holy Spirit who comes upon the person who has received that salvation and to the eternal life that springs up through Him. The One who gives this gift is Jesus Christ alone.

[Question] 7. In John chapter 4 verses 15 and 16, what was the intention of Jesus in saying to the woman who asked for the living water, “Go, call your husband, and come here”?

The Samaritan woman still understood the living water Jesus spoke of as special water that would quench the thirst of the flesh. So she asked Him to make it so that she would neither thirst again nor come to the well to draw water. At this, by saying, *“Go, call your husband, and come here,”* Jesus moved the conversation from the need of the flesh to the matter of the woman’s sin and soul.

Jesus’ telling her to call her husband did not mean merely that she should bring her husband to the well. He was making the woman expose before Him the sin she had hidden and the unsatisfying life she had been living. The woman answered, *“I have no husband,”* and Jesus said, *“You have had five husbands, and the one whom you now have is not your husband; in that you spoke truly.”* Through this the woman came to acknowledge her

true situation without avoiding it.

The living water is not something a person who does not know that he is a sinner can receive as if satisfying a fleshly desire. One must first know the fact that there is sin within him and that the thirst of the soul cannot be quenched by the people, material things, or pleasures of the world. Jesus made the woman realize that there was nothing to expect from herself and that she needed a Savior.

But the purpose of Jesus did not lie in digging up the woman's sin to shame or condemn her. It was to have her bring that sin to Him so that He could solve it. Jesus was baptized in order to take upon Himself the sin of mankind, received the judgment of that sin on the Cross, and rose from the dead and became the Savior. Therefore, the words "*call your husband, and come here*" contain the meaning, "Do not hide your sin and your true self, but bring them before Me. I have come to solve that sin."

As a result, the woman recognized Jesus not as an ordinary man but as a prophet, and finally she came to realize that He was the Christ she had been waiting for. Jesus spoke this word in order to make the woman realize her sin and believe that the One who knew that sin was the very Savior who would solve her sin.

[Question] 8. In John chapter 4 verses 23 and 24, what does it mean to worship God "*in spirit and truth*"?

Worship offered "*in spirit and truth*" is not worship offered while bound to a particular mountain or temple, denomination, or form of worship. The Samaritan woman asked where one ought to worship, on Mount Gerizim or in Jerusalem, but Jesus

said that the hour was coming when they would worship the Father “*neither on this mountain, nor in Jerusalem.*” Because God is Spirit, He is One who cannot be limited to a place or a visible form.

Here, to worship in “*spirit*” means that a person who has received the remission of sin and has the Holy Spirit in his heart worships together with the Holy Spirit. One receives the remission of sin when one believes the fact that Jesus took upon Himself the sin of mankind by being baptized, received the judgment of that sin on the Cross, and rose from the dead and became the Savior. And the Holy Spirit comes as a gift upon the heart of the person who has received the remission of sin. In this way, the worship that a person who has the Holy Spirit in his heart offers to God, who is Spirit, is spiritual worship.

To worship in “*truth*” means to worship while truly believing with the heart that Jesus Christ is the Savior who completely removed all one’s sins. It is not calling on God with the mouth only or taking part in a ceremony; it is accepting as the truth the remission of sin that Jesus accomplished and coming before God with the faith, “Jesus Christ is my God and my Savior.”

Therefore, worship in spirit and truth does not depend on making the atmosphere solemn or stirring up emotions. Nor do splendid buildings or images make worship true. Worship in spirit and truth is when a person who has received the remission of sin by believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit and has the Holy Spirit in his heart serves God, who is Spirit, with true faith that believes in Jesus Christ as his own Savior and with thanksgiving.

Such a person lives with God, who is Spirit, even after leaving the place of worship. Since there is no place where God is not, the life of revering God by faith wherever one is, giving

thanks for the salvation He accomplished, and living according to the will of God is also connected with this worship. God seeks precisely such people, who worship with the remission of sin, the Holy Spirit, and true faith.

[Question] 9. In John chapter 4 verses 31–34, what is it that Jesus called His “food”?

When the disciples urged Jesus, “*Rabbi, eat,*” the food they had in mind was the food the flesh eats. But Jesus said, “*I have food to eat of which you do not know.*” Then He made its meaning clear as follows.

“*My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me, and to finish His work*” (John 4:34). Therefore, the food here does not mean the food the flesh eats, but the spiritual food of doing and completing the work of salvation entrusted by God the Father.

The will of the Father in sending Jesus was to save the people of the world from sin. Jesus took upon Himself all the sins of mankind once and for all by being baptized by John the Baptist, bore those sins and was hung on the Cross and judged, and completed salvation by rising from the dead. This was the work of the Father that Jesus had to accomplish. “To finish” means to complete, realize, and accomplish the work, bringing it to a close without stopping halfway. Jesus obtained spiritual satisfaction and fullness from fulfilling this will of salvation.

This word is also connected with the event, just before it, in which Jesus preached the gospel to the Samaritan woman. Jesus went to the woman who was in sin, made her realize her sin, and let her know that He was the Christ she had been waiting for. After believing in Jesus, the woman left her waterpot, went into the town, and told the people about the Christ. Then many people

came out to Jesus. When Jesus said, “*Lift up your eyes and look at the fields, for they are already white for harvest,*” He was speaking of these very souls. Doing the will of the Father includes not only completing salvation, but also preaching that completed salvation to give life to souls and gather them in.

The work entrusted to those who are born again is to believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit that Jesus has already completed, to preach it to others, and to serve so that the gospel is spread. When they do this work, the Holy Spirit in their hearts rejoices, and just as the flesh gains strength by eating food, the soul gains strength and satisfaction.

Accordingly, the food of Jesus Christ was to complete the work of saving sinners with His baptism, the Cross, and the resurrection in obedience to the will of God the Father, and to preach that word of salvation and gather fruit for eternal life.

[Question] 10. In John chapter 4 verses 39–42, through what process did the Samaritans come to believe in the Christ?

The faith of the Samaritans first began through the testimony of the Samaritan woman. The woman testified that Jesus had told her all that she had done, and urged the people to come and meet the Christ. Many Samaritans who heard that testimony came to Jesus.

But their faith did not remain at the woman’s words alone. They urged Jesus to stay with them, and Jesus stayed there two days and preached the word Himself. As a result, many more came to believe because of the word of Jesus.

Finally, they said to the woman as follows.

“Now we believe, not because of what you said, for we

ourselves have heard Him and we know that this is indeed the Christ, the Savior of the world” (John 4:42).

The testimony of the Samaritan woman became a channel leading people to Jesus, but what gave them sure faith was the word that Jesus Himself spoke. Hearing that word, they knew and believed that Jesus was the Christ who saves them even from their sins, and that He was not the Savior of one nation only but *“the Savior of the world.”*

Therefore, the Samaritans came to Jesus prompted by one person’s testimony, and by hearing and accepting the word of Jesus directly, they came to have true faith in the Christ. A person’s testimony leads people to Jesus, but what establishes faith and saves from sin is, in the end, the word of Christ. ☒

Sermon 1 by Paul C. Jong

The one who worships in spirit and truth

< John 4:1-24 >

“Therefore, when the Lord knew that the Pharisees had heard that Jesus made and baptized more disciples than John (though Jesus Himself did not baptize, but His disciples), He left Judea and departed again to Galilee. But He needed to go through Samaria. So He came to a city of Samaria which is called Sychar, near the plot of ground that Jacob gave to his son Joseph. Now Jacob’s well was there. Jesus therefore, being wearied from His journey, sat thus by the well. It was about the sixth hour. A woman of Samaria came to draw water. Jesus said to her, ‘Give Me a drink.’ For His disciples had gone away into the city to buy food. Then the woman of Samaria said to Him, ‘How is it that You, being a Jew, ask a drink from me, a Samaritan woman?’ For Jews have no dealings with Samaritans. Jesus answered and said to her, ‘If you knew the gift of God, and who it is who says to you, “Give Me a drink,” you would have asked Him, and He would have given you living water.’ The woman said to Him, ‘Sir, You have nothing to draw with, and the well is deep. Where then do You get that living water? Are You greater than our father Jacob, who gave us the well, and drank from it himself, as well as his sons and his livestock?’ Jesus answered and said to her, ‘Whoever drinks of this water will thirst again, but whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him will never thirst. But the water that I shall

give him will become in him a fountain of water springing up into everlasting life.’ The woman said to Him, ‘Sir, give me this water, that I may not thirst, nor come here to draw.’ Jesus said to her, ‘Go, call your husband, and come here.’ The woman answered and said, ‘I have no husband.’ Jesus said to her, ‘You have well said, “I have no husband,” for you have had five husbands, and the one whom you now have is not your husband; in that you spoke truly.’ The woman said to Him, ‘Sir, I perceive that You are a prophet. Our fathers worshiped on this mountain, and you Jews say that in Jerusalem is the place where one ought to worship.’ Jesus said to her, ‘Woman, believe Me, the hour is coming when you will neither on this mountain, nor in Jerusalem, worship the Father. You worship what you do not know; we know what we worship, for salvation is of the Jews. But the hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for the Father is seeking such to worship Him. God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth.’”

Worshipping in spirit and truth

What is it to worship in spirit and truth? I want to tell you its meaning first and then go into the whole passage. It was said that we “*must worship in spirit and truth*” (John 4:24), and “spirit and truth” means to worship before God with a true heart together with the Holy Spirit. Worship in spirit and truth begins from receiving the remission of sin by believing that the Lord took charge of all the sins we human beings commit with the flesh by being baptized by John at the Jordan River, and by believing that He was nailed to the Cross and received all the

judgment for us. In return, we receive the Holy Spirit as a gift, and the worship offered in the state of having true faith and the Holy Spirit in the heart is precisely worship in spirit and truth. The word “spirit” means the Holy Spirit, and the word “truth” refers to the true faith that believes, “Jesus is my Savior; Jesus has perfectly removed all the sins I commit.” The worship offered with that faith is worship in spirit and truth.

The baptism that fulfills all righteousness

In Matthew 3:13 comes the scene in which Jesus is baptized. At the Jordan River, John the Baptist was crying out: repent, return to God, the day of judgment has drawn near and the ax is laid to the root of the trees. Then Jesus came to him and said, you baptize Me. John tried to stop Him: I need to be baptized by You, and are You coming to me? There are two kinds of baptism. The first is the baptism of repentance that John was crying out, calling people to return to God, and the second is the baptism of the remission of sin, that is, the baptism that passes on to Jesus Christ the sins that all the people of this world commit. Jesus said, *“Permit it to be so now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness.”* But people argue, saying, where is it written that sins passed on when Jesus was baptized by John? Then I say, conversely, tell me where it is written that sins did not pass on, and I will find the word and tell you that sins passed on.

All righteousness is the righteousness of God that makes all people sinless. The Book of Isaiah says that human righteousness and good deeds are like a rag. On a rag, the part that has been used to wipe is black, and only the part that has not been used is white. However clean a rag may be, one cannot wipe one’s face or the lenses of one’s glasses with that rag.

Likewise, however many good things a human being may do, God cannot make a human being born as a descendant of Adam His child by that righteousness. The righteousness of God is that He Himself came as a man, received all the sins that all the people of the world commit passed on to Him, was judged on the Cross in their place, and saved them.

If we look at the words “to fulfill all righteousness in this way” in the original language, they are “houtos (οὗτως) dikaiosune (δικαιοσύνη).” “Houtos” means in this way, the most appropriate way, the way without which it cannot be done, and “dikaiosune” means the most just righteousness. This is not something I am explaining spiritually on my own; if you look it up in a Greek dictionary, that is what it says. Greek is the most precise language in the world, so that what is unified in our language into the one word “love” is written distinctly: God’s unconditional love as agape (ἀγάπη), and love between friends as philia (φιλία). That is why God had the New Testament written in the Greek of that time. The meaning contained in this word is: it must be by this most appropriate and most fitting way, My being baptized by you, that all the sins of mankind are taken charge of, and so the most just salvation must be given to mankind. When Jesus was baptized by John and came up from the water, there was a voice from heaven, saying, this is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. It was the Father’s testimony that His Son had taken charge of all the sins of mankind by being baptized by John, the representative of mankind.

Because Jesus was baptized by John, He was nailed to the Cross

Because Jesus had taken charge of our sins with His baptism, He was in anguish when He prayed to God the Father with the

Cross before Him. Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as You will. It means that, having taken charge of all the sins of mankind by being baptized by John, He found it too dreadful to receive in His body all the curse for those sins. But according to the word of the Old Testament that says, cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree, being nailed to a cross, shedding all one's blood, and dying was the law of that age for judging the most wicked criminals. The Lord resolved to follow the will of the Father, who said: have you not taken charge of the sins of mankind? All the sins of mankind are a curse, so receive that curse in your body. To the disciples dozing in Gethsemane He said, the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak; He was arrested through Judas, was scourged and mocked at the court of Pilate, and went carrying the wooden cross on His shoulder. When His whole body was covered with wounds and He was in such great difficulty, Simon of Cyrene, who was passing by, bore that cross in His place. Jesus took charge of our sins with the baptism He received from John, received the curse and the judgment on the Cross for us, and thus accomplished perfect salvation for us. Just as the sins of the people of Israel passed on to the sacrificial offering of the Old Testament when the high priest laid his hands on it, all the sins of mankind passed on to Jesus through John the Baptist, the last prophet of the Old Testament and one in the position of high priest. If our sins had not passed on to Jesus but remained as they were, how could we say that we have received the remission of sin and call God Father? Because our sins passed on to Jesus when He was baptized by John, we can truly believe in Jesus as the Savior, and because we have no sin, God can pour out His Spirit on us. This fact is the basis of worship in spirit and truth. Dear fellow believers, do you believe? Yes. This is not a doctrine but the truth; it is believing the written word.

The true God is Jesus Christ alone, He who is the Savior of you and me

In today's passage, Jesus, leaving Judea and going to Galilee, came to pass through Samaria. Samaria was the region that had suffered the most foreign invasions, so the people of that land were of mixed blood, and the Jewish people, who boasted of their pure blood, had no dealings with the Samaritans. But the peoples who boast of pure blood are, when you look into it, all mixed peoples too. Jesus arrived at the town called Sychar, where Jacob's well was, at about the hottest time of the day. The disciples had gone into the town to buy food, and while Jesus, wearied from His journey, was sitting by the well, a Samaritan woman came to draw water, carrying a waterpot on her head under the hot sun. Jesus spoke to her first. *"Give Me a drink."* The woman answers: You are a Jew, so how is it that You ask me, a Samaritan woman, for a drink? Jesus says, *"If you knew the gift of God, and who it is who says to you, 'Give Me a drink,' you would have asked Him, and He would have given you living water"* (John 4:10). The woman retorts again. "You have nothing to draw with, and this well is deep; where do You get that living water? Our father Jacob gave us this well; are You greater than Jacob?" This woman had nerve. A tussle broke out at the well. If we compare it to boxing, rounds one and two went back and forth neck and neck, but the moment Jesus said, call your husband, the woman collapsed on the spot. In her confusion she said, *"I have no husband"* (John 4:17), and Jesus said, *"You have well said, 'I have no husband,' for you have had five husbands, and the one whom you now have is not your husband; in that you spoke truly."* Since He knew both that she had lived with five husbands and that the sixth man she was living with now was not her husband, it was no contest. The woman raised

both hands in surrender and confessed, You are a prophet.

In the Bible, the true husband refers to Jesus Christ. That this woman lived with six men but none of them was her husband shows people living with things that are not God as their god. Some people believe in money as their husband, their god. But money comes and goes, and far from protecting them, it sometimes ruins them. When they have a little money, next they seek honor. There are people who would give up even their lives if only they could gain honor. Among the theologians of old there were also those who, while unable to believe that Jesus is God, would not bend their will so as not to lose the honor of being called a theologian, and died that way.

There is also a story from the time of the Korean War. In a certain village there was a young bachelor who lived poorly as a farmhand, and when Sunday came, the occupying soldiers told him, as a test, to sweep the yard. When he said he could not sweep because that day was a holy day, they asked whether he wanted to keep his life, and the young man kept saying he could not sweep even if he died, until he was tied to a tree and killed. The church people exalted him as a martyr, saying that he had given up his life to keep the Sabbath.

But, dear fellow believers, what is wrong with sweeping the yard once on Sunday, when one eats meals and sleeps on that day oneself? The Sabbath is the word telling us to keep the faith that believes that the Lord has removed our sins. The word that tells us to believe and keep this gospel must be interpreted spiritually; if one were to keep it literally, one would have to cut off the electricity and let even the servants and the animals all rest. In that age many lost their lives trying to keep the literal commandment, and denominations hold up such things as their history and tradition. But giving up one's life for such a private matter is not martyrdom for the gospel. There are people who

have made honor their god, people who have made money their god, and people who have made the incantations of religion their god. There is a religion that chants incantations at sunrise, there is a prayer that repeats all day long, Mary, full of grace, pray for us, and there is a religion that repeats Namu Amitabul Gwanseeum Bosal. There are also people who serve pleasure as their god. But money, honor, pleasure, power, or one's own self can never become God for us. The real God is Jesus Christ alone, He who is the Savior of you and me.

God seeks those who worship in spirit and truth

The woman changes the subject. Our fathers worshiped on this mountain, but you say that one must worship in Jerusalem. When Solomon departed from the word of God, God split the kingdom and gave ten tribes to Jeroboam and the tribe of Judah to Rehoboam, the son of Solomon. After the south and the north were divided that way, the north set up golden calves on the mountains and worshiped on days they themselves had fixed, while the south served the LORD in Jerusalem. In name, both were worship offered in the name of the LORD. The woman's boasting of Jacob's well and arguing about the mountain on which to worship was, in today's terms, arguing about denominations. The words, this well that our father Jacob gave us is old, so are You greater than Jacob, are like the boast that our denomination has history and tradition.

People do not know how Jesus Christ saved them from their sins, the gospel of the water and the Spirit, and only boast of their denominations. But even the history of Presbyterianism, when you look into it, is no more than a few hundred years. It was in the 1700s that the seminaries were established. After

Christianity was officially recognized in Rome by the Edict of Milan in 313, until Luther appeared, it was the Dark Ages. Under the name of heresy they killed people and confiscated their property, building up enormous power, and in the Middle Ages, not even a king survived if he opposed the pope. There also arose a denomination that broke away over the marriage problem of the king of England and mixed the rites of Catholicism with the word of Protestantism.

The very term Reformed Protestant means to protest. However old a denomination may be, what is there to boast of in a long history? Jesus says, *“Woman, believe Me, the hour is coming when you will neither on this mountain, nor in Jerusalem, worship the Father” (John 4:21), and “the hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for the Father is seeking such to worship Him” (John 4:23).* It is not this mountain, not that mountain, and not a denomination. God seeks those who worship in spirit and truth.

However deep Jacob’s well may be, what use is it? If you draw one waterpot, pour it into a jar, and the whole family drinks it, washes the rice, and washes their faces, it is all gone in a day. The next day you must draw again, and you must draw endlessly, day after day. However much history and tradition a denomination may have, the doctrines set up by man cannot satisfy a person’s heart and cannot give living water to the heart. But the person who drinks the water Jesus gives, that is, the word that makes one born again of water and the Spirit, becomes in his heart a fountain of water springing up into everlasting life. If we believe in our hearts that Jesus took charge of all sins most appropriately and most justly by being baptized by John, and died on the Cross and removed all the sins of you and me, we obtain salvation and become a fountain of water springing up into everlasting life. The remission of sin is received once and

for all, and it is effective forever. A person who has received the remission of sin does not need to receive the remission of sin again. The more we hear the word, the more we only become a fountain that keeps springing up.

If we want to receive the remission of sin, we must know what kind of sinner we are. And we must know that what we have believed and followed until now is not God. It is said that when a certain president of this world passed away, the representatives of various religions took turns praying for his soul. But however much they pray, does religion save? Does money save? Do honor, power, or one's own self save? However much offering we give, and even if we offer up all our possessions, money cannot remove sin. In the old funeral customs, people stuck money on the bier, saying that one needs travel money even on the road to the next world, but can one travel the road to the next world with money? Heaven and hell have nothing to do with money, material things, pleasure, or honor. Only by believing in the baptism Jesus received from John and the Cross do we go to heaven.

David confessed as follows in Psalm 51. "*Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, And in sin my mother conceived me*" (Psalm 51:5). It is a confession that he was a sinner born inheriting the sins of his parents and the sins of his ancestors. That is why, from a person, twelve kinds of sins keep blossoming, like flowers blooming twelve months a year. However much one resolves, one commits them again the next year, and it is human life to commit sin until one enters the grave.

David also confesses. "*That You may be found just when You speak, And blameless when You judge*" (Psalm 51:4). It means that if the Lord says my sin has been removed, it has been removed, and that the Lord's judgment is entirely right. To receive the remission of sin, we must believe the word of God

entirely, like this. Do not say, like General Naaman, “In my opinion the rivers of our country would be better”; if He says to wash in the Jordan River, we just wash. We were not born because we wanted to be born. We were born and became sinners regardless of our will, and God has made us His children regardless of our efforts. We just have to believe. *“You shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free” (John 8:32).*

God the Father seeks those who worship in spirit and truth. The worship offered by accepting into the heart the gospel of the water and the Spirit that Jesus gave is true worship, and the worship offered with true faith, with the Holy Spirit in the heart, is spiritual worship. The person who does not believe that Jesus took charge of all the sins of the world when He was baptized by John has sin in his heart. Form is no problem at all. What does it matter whether one worships here or there? We must truly receive the remission of sin and then worship. I give thanks that God has made it possible for all of us to worship in spirit and truth. That He took charge of all the sins we commit with the flesh in this world, that He took charge of all the sins we commit in the heart, that all the sins we commit out of our shortcomings have also passed on to Jesus—I am truly thankful. So although we are lacking, we have no sin. We have truly become righteous. I give thanks to God, who has made us such people. I will close the message here. ☒

Sermon 2 by Paul C. Jong

Salvation that comes through faith, not the law

< John 4:1-26 >

“Therefore, when the Lord knew that the Pharisees had heard that Jesus made and baptized more disciples than John (though Jesus Himself did not baptize, but His disciples), He left Judea and departed again to Galilee. But He needed to go through Samaria. So He came to a city of Samaria which is called Sychar, near the plot of ground that Jacob gave to his son Joseph. Now Jacob’s well was there. Jesus therefore, being wearied from His journey, sat thus by the well. It was about the sixth hour. A woman of Samaria came to draw water. Jesus said to her, ‘Give Me a drink.’ For His disciples had gone away into the city to buy food. Then the woman of Samaria said to Him, ‘How is it that You, being a Jew, ask a drink from me, a Samaritan woman?’ For Jews have no dealings with Samaritans. Jesus answered and said to her, ‘If you knew the gift of God, and who it is who says to you, “Give Me a drink,” you would have asked Him, and He would have given you living water.’ The woman said to Him, ‘Sir, You have nothing to draw with, and the well is deep. Where then do You get that living water? Are You greater than our father Jacob, who gave us the well, and drank from it himself, as well as his sons and his livestock?’ Jesus answered and said to her, ‘Whoever drinks of this water will thirst again, but whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him will never thirst. But the water that I shall

give him will become in him a fountain of water springing up into everlasting life.’ The woman said to Him, ‘Sir, give me this water, that I may not thirst, nor come here to draw.’ Jesus said to her, ‘Go, call your husband, and come here.’ The woman answered and said, ‘I have no husband.’ Jesus said to her, ‘You have well said, “I have no husband,” for you have had five husbands, and the one whom you now have is not your husband; in that you spoke truly.’ The woman said to Him, ‘Sir, I perceive that You are a prophet. Our fathers worshiped on this mountain, and you Jews say that in Jerusalem is the place where one ought to worship.’ Jesus said to her, ‘Woman, believe Me, the hour is coming when you will neither on this mountain, nor in Jerusalem, worship the Father. You worship what you do not know; we know what we worship, for salvation is of the Jews. But the hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for the Father is seeking such to worship Him. God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth.’ The woman said to Him, ‘I know that Messiah is coming’ (who is called Christ). ‘When He comes, He will tell us all things.’ Jesus said to her, ‘I who speak to you am He.’”

At the well of the town of Sychar in Samaria

God speaks. God clearly says that if we want to receive the remission of sin while living the life of faith, we must not do it by the law; by the law we cannot obtain salvation. Looking at today’s passage, Jesus, on His way from Judea to Galilee, needed to go through Samaria, and so He came to a town of Samaria called Sychar. That place was near the plot of ground

that Jacob gave to his son Joseph, and Jacob's well was also there. Jesus, wearied from His journey, sat thus by the well, and it was about the sixth hour. While passing through Samaria, Jesus plopped down at the small well of a town called Sychar. Having walked a long way, He must have been very tired in body.

At that time a Samaritan woman came to draw water. The disciples had all gone into the town to buy food, and Jesus, who had settled down by the well, asked that Samaritan woman who had come to draw water, *"Give Me a drink."* But that woman answered, *"How is it that You, being a Jew, ask a drink from me, a Samaritan woman?"* This was because Jews had no dealings with Samaritans. Jesus answered and said, *"If you knew the gift of God, and who it is who says to you, 'Give Me a drink,' you would have asked Him, and He would have given you living water"* (John 4:10), and the woman asked back, *"Sir, You have nothing to draw with, and the well is deep. Where then do You get that living water? Are You greater than our father Jacob, who gave us the well, and drank from it himself, as well as his sons and his livestock?"* (John 4:11–12). Then Jesus spoke, conversing with this woman. *"Whoever drinks of this water will thirst again, but whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him will never thirst. But the water that I shall give him will become in him a fountain of water springing up into everlasting life"* (John 4:13–14). The woman said, *"Sir, give me this water, that I may not thirst, nor come here to draw"* (John 4:15).

The deep gulf between the Jews and the Samaritan woman

We must live the life of faith in the spirit. We must live it with the faith that believes in God. Yet looking at this word we

have read today, God is telling us the fact that this Samaritan woman who lived in the town of Sychar had been living the life of faith legalistically. And God is telling us that if we believe in God by the law, we cannot receive the remission of sin and cannot have the desire of our hearts fulfilled either. Although Jesus, thirsty in the flesh, asked for a drink of water, we can see that this woman was a person who leaned heavily toward hypocrisy and formality rather than the actual problem before her eyes. Whether young or old, if anyone is exhausted and asks for water, a person who has come to draw water could simply draw some with the bucket and give it without asking any particular reason. But this woman argued, “How is it that You, being a Jew, ask me, a Samaritan woman, for a drink?” There was that deep a gulf in this person’s heart.

Though it was the same land of Israel, the city of Samaria had been invaded by foreign armies, so the women of that town had had relations with men of other nations and given birth to children of mixed blood, and religions that served foreign gods had also come in. So, although they were the same nation and the same race, the people on the Jerusalem side looked down on the Samaritans. Jesus was a man of Judea in the south and this person was a woman of Samaria in the north, so they were in a relationship of great hostility toward each other. It was an age when a Jewish man of the south completely looked down on a woman of the north. Yet Jesus did not look down on this woman, but asked her for a drink of water. Then the woman said, “*How is it that You, being a Jew, ask a drink from me, a Samaritan woman?*” and Jesus said, “*who it is who says to you, ‘Give Me a drink,’ you would have asked Him.*”

Then this woman retorts. “From the look of it, You have nothing in Your hands, no bucket and no waterpot, and this well is deep, so with what skill do You say You can give me water?

It makes no sense. Who on earth are You that, in a position where You have to beg water from me to drink, You say so confidently that You will give me water, without even a bucket? With what do You mean to draw from this deep well without a bucket?" What this woman was trusting in was the bucket that was in her hand right then and Jacob's well that was in her own town. Dear fellow believers, the people of our country do not know the importance of a well very well. This is because if you dig just about anywhere, water usually comes out. But Israel is a land of sandy desert. There, if a person digs in one place and water comes out, that person has caught a great blessing and has become a solidly rich man. It is a country where water is that precious. Yet the well that Jacob dug, though such a long time had passed, still had living water coming up from deep down. So this woman thought that she was holding the initiative, saying, "Do You mean to say that You can give me living water better than this well?" If we look into this woman's heart, judging from her bringing up Jacob, she was a person who believed in God as an Israelite. But when we see her confidently arguing before Jesus, we can know the fact that this person had been living the life of faith legalistically.

"Whoever drinks of this water will thirst again"

There are many places in the Bible where the things of heaven are explained by bringing up the realities of this earth. When this woman, relying on the legalistic life of faith by bringing up Jacob's well, spoke challengingly, "Can You really give me living water?" Jesus said many things to this woman, and through those words we can know one clear fact. In verse 13 He said, *"Jesus answered and said to her, 'Whoever drinks*

of this water will thirst again’” (John 4:13). Dear fellow believers, if you cannot live the life of faith spiritually, cannot live it with the faith that believes in God, and instead hold only to the commands of the law that God commanded, do this and do not do that—the commands of the Torah—and live the life of faith legalistically and by works, carrying out only those commands, you become thirsty. To be thirsty means that there is no satisfaction in the life of faith. *“Whoever drinks of this water will thirst again, but whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him will never thirst”*: the water God gives becomes water that, once received and drunk, never lets one thirst again, but the water drawn and drunk from Jacob’s well only wets the throat for a moment, and one becomes thirsty again. That is what this word means.

We must live the life of faith in the spirit, with the faith that believes in God, with the faith that believes what God has accomplished. We must not live the life of faith legalistically. If we live the life of faith by the law, we become thirsty. If a person, while believing in Jesus and in God, holds only to God’s commands, without knowing how God has removed all his sins and without having received the remission of sin, and lives the life of faith striving to live according to God’s will and striving to carry out that word, then because a human being is lacking by nature and the law does not fill up that lack but rather presses down on him, he suffers famine in the life of faith and becomes thirsty. It means that with the faith of the law, one becomes thirsty.

Dear fellow believers, the life of faith must be lived in the spirit. It must be lived with the faith that believes in God. It must be lived by knowing how God has removed my sins and with the faith that believes that fact. Even while believing in the same God, some people live the life of faith by the law. They just come

out to church, saying that they must live according to God's will; they come out at dawn and sing, "Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, early in the morning our song shall rise to Thee, holy, holy, holy, God in three Persons, blessed Trinity"; they pray and ask for what they need, and they pray again asking to be forgiven for the sins they committed yesterday. During the day, at work or at school, they hold back even when they get angry, saying that they live according to God's will, and since He said, "*You shall love your neighbor as yourself*," they say, "Yes, I will live that way," and strive to live just so. But since they cannot live perfectly according to God's commands all day long, by evening a few sins have piled up, and they gather again and pray a prayer of repentance, saying, "Lord, I am a sinner," and at night they hold an all-night prayer and again a dawn prayer, and they say they live according to God's will every day. But before we say that we live according to God's commands, we must first see whether or not we are human beings who can really live according to God's commands. We must first know God's commands, the reality of those commands, and our own ability, and then live the life of faith. Can we human beings really carry out God's commands? Can we keep God's commands one hundred percent? We must clearly know the reason why God gave us the Ten Commandments and commanded us with the 613 articles of the law what to do and what not to do. We must first know the meaning of why God spoke that word, and then either do it or not do it.

The reason God gave the law

God the Father gave the law to us human beings through Moses. The Bible says, "*For the law was given through Moses*,

but grace and truth came through Jesus Christ” (John 1:17). God the Father raised up Moses and gave the people of Israel, and all mankind, what to do and what not to do in the Ten Commandments and the 613 commandments. Then we must know with what heart God gave us the law through Moses. God speaks. God says that He gave the law to teach us that we are precisely sinners, and that this is why He gave us the 613 commandments and the Ten Commandments.

Dear fellow believers, when parents scold their children, there are times when, in their anger, they say, “Go out and drop dead,” and in severe cases they pour out harsh words mixed even with vulgar curses unfit to speak. But is the parents’ heart really a heart that wants the child to die? No. Is not the parents’ heart saying, “Because you behave that way my heart aches; please, just do not do that”? That is right. Only when one knows the heart contained in what the parents said can one live according to that father’s will. Our God gave us human beings the commands, do this and do not do that. And God the Father gave one more thing. He sent Jesus to this earth, and thereby He removed all our sins. Only when we know the fact of how Jesus Christ removed our sins, receive the remission of sin through faith, live the life of faith, and believe in God can we go to heaven and can the life of faith become comfortable. If we believe under the misunderstanding and delusion that we keep God’s commands and live according to His will every day, we become thirsty.

This woman came out every day under the scorching sun to draw water, at about the sixth hour, at midday when the sand glitters. Even if one draws water and drinks it every day, drinking it and then drawing more to take home and keep and drink, in that way one becomes thirsty every day. Dear fellow believers, if you believe in Jesus without knowing that Jesus

Christ has removed all your sins, and without knowing the fact of how God took away all your sins one hundred percent, concretely, even the sins you will commit in the future, it is hard. Believing in Jesus, deep furrows of worry are carved into your forehead; believing in Jesus, you become sad, distressed, and truly weary. If we are to believe in Jesus, if we are to believe in God, we must believe rightly.

Before meeting Jesus, this Samaritan woman lived the life of faith by the law. But when Jesus said that if one drinks the water He gives once, one never thirsts again, this woman says, “Is there such a thing? Then give it to me once and let me see.” This woman was truly wise, and a very assertive woman. When a man she was seeing for the first time in her life said He would give her water, she told Him not just to talk but to give it and let her see. Jesus is remarkable, but this woman is remarkable too. In the Bible, remarkable people often meet one another. It is because God works by the principle of representation.

When the woman asked Him to give it, Jesus said, “*Go, call your husband, and come here*” (John 4:16). For her part, the woman must have thought, “If He is going to give it, He should give it quickly; why does He attach the condition of calling my husband?” So when she said, “*I have no husband*” (John 4:17), Jesus said, “*You have well said, ‘I have no husband,’ for you have had five husbands, and the one whom you now have is not your husband; in that you spoke truly.*” It was not that she had no husband; there was a man she was living with even then, and Jesus knew it all—that she had lived with five men in the past, and that the man she was living with at present was not her husband either. “What? We met today for the first time, so how does He know all about me? How has this come about?” Startled, the woman said, “*Sir, I perceive that You are a prophet*” (John 4:19). It is a confession that You are a servant of God. From that

moment this woman's heart yielded. It was because she had met One who knew her through and through. Dear fellow believers, how many sins must one have to come out to draw water under the scorching sun? In Israel, from twelve noon until two o'clock is the time for a midday nap. Yet this woman came to draw water at twelve noon. She came at a time when other people would not come to draw water.

For us human beings, God is the true husband

Dear fellow believers, all people who have sin are like that. Jesus is the Creator who made us and our Savior. He who bears the name Jesus was originally, in fact, God, and He is God even now. In order to save us, He put on a human body for a while and came to this earth, borrowing the body of a virgin. And having come, He met this woman and spoke. Call your husband; I have no husband; what you said is right; you lived with five men in the past, but they were not your husband either, and the one you are living with now is not your husband. This woman had no satisfaction.

Dear fellow believers, even if you live the life of faith, if you live it legalistically, there is no satisfaction. In what would there be satisfaction? There is no satisfaction. We must meet the true husband. For those who believe in Jesus, the true husband is precisely Jesus. Jesus is my Creator and my God; He is my Savior and the God of salvation who saved me from all my sins. Jesus is my Shepherd and the God who gave me eternal life. He, Jesus, has become the husband to us saints, to us mankind. He is the true husband. Dear fellow believers, do you believe? He is the husband. He is our husband. For us human beings, God is the true husband. In fact, a human being has no true husband. A

husband is one who does everything for you and takes responsibility for everything, but how can a human being take responsibility for everything about another human being? That is why this woman had no satisfaction.

“Neither on this mountain, nor in Jerusalem”

This woman says, *“Sir, I perceive that You are a prophet,”* and then brings up another subject. This woman was still a woman bound by the law. Let us look at verse 20. *“Our fathers worshiped on this mountain, and you Jews say that in Jerusalem is the place where one ought to worship. Jesus said to her, ‘Woman, believe Me, the hour is coming when you will neither on this mountain, nor in Jerusalem, worship the Father. You worship what you do not know; we know what we worship, for salvation is of the Jews. But the hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for the Father is seeking such to worship Him. God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth.’”* (John 4:20–24). To the woman’s words, our fathers worshiped on this mountain, and you say that in Jerusalem is the place where one ought to worship, Jesus said, believe Me, the hour is coming when you will neither on this mountain, nor in Jerusalem, worship the Father, and, *“You worship what you do not know; we know what we worship, for salvation is of the Jews,”* and the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth.

Now the Samaritans worship on Mount Gerizim, while the Jews in the south say that the place to worship is in Jerusalem. This story comes from the history of the Old Testament. When King Solomon died, his son Rehoboam became king and worshiped at the temple in Jerusalem. But Jeroboam, who had

been a servant of Solomon, raised the banner of revolt, went out and set up a separate household, and led out ten tribes and became king. It was something God permitted. But these people not only founded a nation; they also corrupted the system of sacrifice by which God was served. They arbitrarily moved and fixed the date of the feast to the fifteenth day of the eighth month, and as for priests, instead of appointing Levites, they appointed anyone at all as a priest, unconditionally, if only he wanted to and brought one young bull and seven rams. So the worship of the Samaritans became sheer nonsense worship, while the Jews in the south were worshiping rightly. That is why this woman brought up the matter of place, saying, “You people say that worship must be offered in Jerusalem, but we offer worship in Samaria.”

A legalistic person, a person who has not yet met God, talks a lot about place. He talks a lot about the outer shell. He talks a lot about whether one is Presbyterian or Baptist or Full Gospel, orthodox or unorthodox. People who have not yet met God have one unchanging thing in common. It is always the same with those who do ministry without having received the remission of sin. Just as if they went around with “I am a Presbyterian” written large on their faces, they hang the name of their denomination, the Presbyterian Church of Korea, in large letters on the church sign. But, dear fellow believers, when you go to the kingdom of God, there is no Presbyterian Church, no Baptist Church, no denomination at all. In the kingdom of God there is only the sign that says the Church of Jesus. The Church of Jesus, only the Church of Jesus. If we look at what this woman does, it is all legalistic. He said, You worship what you do not know; we know what we worship, for salvation is of the Jews, and this means that the Savior is born of the Jews, through the tribe of Judah.

It would take too long to tell all of this word, but God promised long ago that through Judah, one of the twelve sons of Jacob, the kings of Israel would continue to be born, and that later the Savior, the Messiah, that is, Jesus, would come. That is why Jesus spoke that word. And He said, *“The hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth”* (John 4:23). It means that God receives the worship offered while one has received the remission of sin and knows and believes in God rightly, and that God seeks those who worship like that. Now, let us sum up this word.

The law is a tutor

What is the law? If a person who believes in Christianity still has sin in his heart, he has not received the remission of sin. Such people live the life of faith by the law. They try to serve God with the law. But when we serve God, we must serve Him not with the law, but with the faith that believes in God, through grace. We serve God because we have received the remission of sin and are thankful for that grace of the remission of sin, and we serve God because we have become the children of God. So let us look up the word about what the law is and why God gave the law, and examine how our faith has gone wrong and how Jesus has removed our sins.

It is Galatians 3:23–27. *“But before faith came, we were kept under guard by the law, kept for the faith which would afterward be revealed. Therefore the law was our tutor to bring us to Christ, that we might be justified by faith. But after faith has come, we are no longer under a tutor. For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ.”* Saying that after faith has come we

are no longer under a tutor, it calls the law our tutor to bring us to Christ. Then what does “tutor” mean? In our country there used to be village schools in the old days. In the schoolhouse the schoolmaster sat with a long pipe in his mouth and a switch in his hand, with Chinese classics such as Mencius spread open before him. But though the schoolmaster was there, there were no students. How, then, were the students gathered? The schoolmaster had servants. When he ordered a servant, “Hey, Dolsoe, go today and bring all the young masters of the noble families. Have them here and seated by such and such an hour,” the servants like Dolsoe and Meongsoe would diligently carry the young masters on their backs or bring them by the hand, and gather the sons of the noble families in a row in the schoolhouse. Who is it that brings the students to the village school? It is precisely these servants. These servants were called the tutor (Greek paidagogos, the slave who led a child to school). Do you understand what this means?

The law is for making us come to know sin

What the law is, precisely, is that which makes us realize and know sin. It makes us know how great a sinner we are. If we look at God’s Ten Commandments, they speak of ten things to do and not to do: you shall have no other gods before Me, you shall not make any image or bow down to it, you shall not take the name of God in vain, keep the Sabbath day holy, honor your parents, you shall not murder, you shall not commit adultery, you shall not steal, you shall not bear false witness, you shall not covet. From the first commandment to the fourth are the commandments concerning God, and from the fifth commandment to the tenth are the commands that a person ought

to carry out toward other people. But concerning these commands, what did God say in Romans chapter 3? *“Therefore by the deeds of the law no flesh will be justified in His sight, for by the law is the knowledge of sin”* (Romans 3:20). It means that what God commanded was in order to make us realize and know the sin that is within us, in order to teach us that we have sins like these and are human beings who commit these sins.

Then let us compare and take a look. At the back of the hymnal there are the Ten Commandments. Open to the Ten Commandments and also open to Mark chapter 7. First, let us read the Ten Commandments in one voice. The first is *“You shall have no other gods before Me”* (Exodus 20:3), the second is *“You shall not make for yourself a carved image—any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth; you shall not bow down to them nor serve them. For I, the LORD your God, am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children to the third and fourth generations of those who hate Me, but showing mercy to thousands, to those who love Me and keep My commandments”* (Exodus 20:4–6), the third is *“You shall not take the name of the LORD your God in vain, for the LORD will not hold him guiltless who takes His name in vain”* (Exodus 20:7), the fourth is *“Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days you shall labor and do all your work, but the seventh day is the Sabbath of the LORD your God. In it you shall do no work: you, nor your son, nor your daughter, nor your male servant, nor your female servant, nor your cattle, nor your stranger who is within your gates. For in six days the LORD made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested the seventh day. Therefore the LORD blessed the Sabbath day and hallowed it”* (Exodus 20:8–11), the fifth is *“Honor your father and your mother, that your days may be long*

upon the land which the LORD your God is giving you” (Exodus 20:12), the sixth is “You shall not murder” (Exodus 20:13), the seventh is “You shall not commit adultery” (Exodus 20:14), the eighth is “You shall not steal” (Exodus 20:15), the ninth is “You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor” (Exodus 20:16), and the tenth is “You shall not covet your neighbor’s house; you shall not covet your neighbor’s wife, nor his male servant, nor his female servant, nor his ox, nor his donkey, nor anything that is your neighbor’s” (Exodus 20:17). These are God’s commands. In the Bible there are many other commandments besides these, to do this and not to do that, but ten were selected by the principle of representation and are called the Ten Commandments, and all of God’s commands are included in these Ten Commandments. Yet concerning these Ten Commandments, this law, God says that the law is for making us realize and know sin.

Now, let us look first at the commandments concerning people. He said, honor your father and your mother. That word is an absolutely right command. But we must first see whether or not you and I, who have not yet received the remission of sin, can actually carry out this commandment. Let us read Mark 7:20–23. *“And He said, ‘What comes out of a man, that defiles a man. For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lewdness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness. All these evil things come from within and defile a man.’”* He said that *“out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts.”* These are precisely the twelve sins we have inherited through Adam and Eve, the ancestors of us mankind.

God’s command said to honor one’s parents, but there is an evil heart inside a person’s heart, so it is dark. Far from honoring their parents, wanting to give their parents a hard time is the

human heart. So we can know that the law is for making us realize and know sin, and that God gave this command in order to teach us sin. God did not give this command saying, “This command is right, so live one hundred percent according to it.” Rather, He gave it in the sense of saying: you have already fallen into the devil’s enticement and are swarming with sin inside. Your seed is a seed of evildoing, a seed that does only evil. Though you are such a seed, you do not know yourselves well. So I give you commands so that you may know how filthy and how evil you yourselves are. That is precisely the Ten Commandments God gave, the ten commandments God commanded us. Do you understand?

When it comes to a parent’s words, one must know their meaning and then run the errand. There is a story I often tell. A parent sends a child on an errand, saying, “Sunjong, go over to the village over there and buy something for me.” But Sunjong, without even listening to what the parent is specifically telling him to buy, just picks up a basket, spins around, says, “Yes, I will be right back,” and dashes off. Even when the father says, “Child, at least find out what you are supposed to bring back before you go,” he says, “Oh, I understand. I will be back in no time,” and off he goes. The father, dumbfounded, says, “However well that boy obeys, to go on an errand without even knowing what he is being told to do—I will have to educate that boy a bit.”

That son goes to the village over there and thinks for a long while, “Huh, why did I come carrying a basket? What did Father tell me to do?” but he cannot figure it out. Whether he was told to buy tofu, to get rice wine, to buy cigarettes, or to buy beef, he cannot figure it out at all. However much he thinks, he cannot figure it out. So he trudges back and says, “Father, what did you tell me to do? I have forgotten it.” The father thunders at him.

“You rascal, however much better you obey than your older brother, you should understand the words before you go; should you not go after understanding what I told you to do? I was about to tell you to buy two geun of beef, half a mal of rice wine, and a carton of cigarettes, and if you had listened to me in the first place, you would have bought them already, would you not? Do not do that from now on. Here, take the money too.” How was he going to buy anything without even taking the money? Obedience that has not heard the content of the word is nothing but a wasted trip.

God gave us the Ten Commandments through Moses. As in the movie *The Ten Commandments*, amid flashing light on Mount Sinai, the words “*You shall have no other gods before Me. You shall not make for yourself a carved image—any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth; you shall not bow down to them nor serve them*” were engraved on two tablets of stone. When Moses came down from the mountain carrying those heavy two tablets of stone, the people had already made a calf idol and were playing music, saying, “Good, this calf is the god who brought us out of the land of Egypt. We must offer sacrifices to it. this calf is the god who brought us out of the land of Egypt,” and eating, drinking, and rising up to play before the calf, they were in an uproar, doing all kinds of filthy things.

It means that while Moses was coming down with the command God had given, “You shall have no other gods before Me; do not serve idols,” they were already serving other gods. Then why did God give this law? It was in order to show that you people are precisely the human beings who serve other gods. And since they were doing all kinds of filthy things with women before the calf, though the seventh commandment said you shall

not commit adultery, they were already human beings who committed adultery. While he was coming down with the ten commands, they were already doing those things, so the law was given in order to teach the servant of God, and the people of Israel, that you people are precisely the seed recorded here. Do you understand this word?

Know yourself

But Christian believers today do not know this principle, and with the way of thinking that they must keep God's commands unconditionally because they are God's commands, they strive to keep them morning and evening, and they strive to keep them for fifty years, sixty years. So the church today weeps every day. Because they weep in church every day, saying, I could not keep God's commands today either, and I will not be able to keep them tomorrow either, people who do not believe in Jesus dislike the church. The Bible says rejoice always, pray without ceasing, in everything give thanks, but in the church they weep at dawn, weep in the morning, weep in the afternoon, weep at night, weep at the all-night prayer, come home and weep, and weep whenever they gather. So the people of the world say, "I do not want to believe like that; I do not want to weep." It is because, not knowing the intention of what God said, they believed in Jesus legalistically, the wrong way around.

He said to honor one's parents, but what comes out of a person's heart is evil thoughts, so when people meet their parents they want to give them a hard time. Do you know what it means here to give them a hard time? Children have a heart that wants to make trouble for their parents. "It will not do for our parents' hearts to be so much at peace; how can I give them a hard time?"

Strangely, children are all the same. Before they come of age, before they marry and have children of their own, they all have that heart. Is it there, or not? It is there. That is why people say that only after having children of one's own does a person become an adult and come of age. But even after being married off, the heart that wants to give the parents a hard time, the heart that wants to make trouble for them, remains. No one knows why they drink so much of the liquor they were told not to drink, and why they gamble so much when their parents desperately try to stop them. Why do they pick out and do only the things they are told not to do?

When a person is born into this world, his seed is born as a seed of evildoing, as an evil human being. When a newborn baby cries, waa, waa, people say, "Oh my, he is like an angel; he is so, so cute," but when you look into it, that baby is a lump of sin and a lump of evil. That is why grown-ups call their own children a jar of trouble. It means a jar that gives them trouble. Socrates said, "Know yourself." That man spoke really well. But Jesus, so to speak, goes one step further and says, "Know your true state, know your seed." What kind of seed is one's own seed? Everyone thinks that he himself is at least somewhat all right and is a usable seed if only one or two things are fixed, but in reality the seed of us human beings is not a seed that becomes usable by fixing just one or two things. It is a seed that must be fixed entirely, one hundred percent; it is a seed of evildoing. It is a seed that is of no use at all and deserves to go to hell. Our God says that human life is to live doing crazy things all one's life and finally to go to hell. Is that so, or not? We human beings are such beings.

Let us look at fornication. He said not to make idols or bow down to them, but people have in them a fornication that changes even their gods at will. They carve a stone and set it up and say,

“O divine spirit, divine spirit,” and then, if they do not like it, they kick it away with their foot; they carve a piece of wood into a strange shape and set it up and say, “O tree, O tree,” and then, if they do not like it either, they kick it away. If the next-door neighbor serves some Horanggae religion, they step forward to serve it too, and when some Uranghorang religion comes out that bows to the sun in the east, no one knows how diligently they chase after it. What fornication this is! They fornicate in chasing after gods, and fornicate in chasing after people. A fornicating heart, a thieving heart, a murderous heart, a wicked heart, covetousness and deceit and lewdness and an evil eye and blasphemy and pride and foolishness—all these evil things come from within and defile a person. Because we are born with these twelve sins, the branches keep sprouting up—theft today, covetousness, murder, adultery tomorrow—and to commit sin all one’s life is precisely human life.

What is it that points out that this sinful life is wrong? It is precisely God’s command, the law. So while believing in Jesus, we must not live the life of faith by the law, and we must not strive to keep the law either. If a person strives to live according to the law and to keep the commands of the law, that person will surely go to hell on that road. However, if one strives to keep the law, there is one gain one is sure to get. It is realizing that one is an infinite sinner before God. That one thing, one realizes. After realizing that fact, one must clearly know how Jesus removed one’s sins. Then that person receives the remission of sin. It means that the law was not given for us to keep God’s commands.

And the law changes again. Those who have received the remission of sin keep not the law but the law of the Spirit. There is the law of the Spirit, by which one lives with love, joy, peace, gentleness, and self-control, loving souls, being truly gentle,

showing mercy, and living with goodness, faithfulness, and self-control. That law of the Spirit is greater and more perfect than the law. As recorded in Mark, fornication and murder and covetousness and wickedness and deceit and lewdness and an evil eye and blasphemy and pride and foolishness—are these hearts in your hearts, or not? Do you do these actions, or not? If you do these actions, who points them out? God’s command, the law, points them out. People rebuke only on the basis of the actions revealed outwardly, but God says that the very fact that the evil heart is in the heart is a lump of sin.

That is why we say that this Samaritan woman lived the life of faith by the law. “We offer worship on this mountain of Samaria, but you people say it must be offered in Jerusalem, so do you mean that I too must go to Jerusalem to offer worship? Must I change the place? Then what becomes of this well of Jacob?” And this woman relied on Jacob’s well. Who is Jacob? According to the genealogy that says, “*The book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the Son of David, the Son of Abraham,*” he is one of the three generations of the ancestors of faith—Abraham begot Isaac, and Isaac begot Jacob.

He is so great an ancestor of faith that it is said, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, God is the God of the living; and through this Jacob came twelve sons, and through those twelve sons the nation of Israel was formed, so he is no ordinary person. That is why the woman asked, “Are You greater than this well of Jacob?” But in fact Jesus is greater than Jacob. It is because the One who caused Jacob to be born, the One who put him in his mother’s womb, is precisely Jesus, the Creator, Jesus, our Savior. It means that this woman was not relying on God at the time, but relied more on Jacob, on what had come down from Jacob as tradition.

Because she relied on that tradition, this woman was thirsty

every day, even though she drew and drank water every day. A person who relies more on human words and religious tradition than on God and the word of God surely feels thirst in the throat exactly like this Samaritan woman. Even though he draws and drinks every day, he is thirsty every day; he has to come to draw water every day; and every day he is ashamed before people and ashamed before God. Why is that? It is because the sins he commits every day are many. The life of faith must be lived in the spirit. It must be lived with the faith that believes in God.

The sin of the world that passed on through the baptism

We must clearly know how our Lord has removed our sins. Only then can we offer worship before God in spirit and truth. By truly believing, truly receiving the remission of sin, receiving the Holy Spirit, and becoming children of God, we come to have the qualification to truly offer worship before God. But what does this woman say? *“The woman said to Him, ‘I know that Messiah is coming’ (who is called Christ). ‘When He comes, He will tell us all things.’ Jesus said to her, ‘I who speak to you am He.’”* (John 4:25–26). This woman was waiting for the Messiah, the Savior. The word Messiah means the Savior. It means the One who pulls us out of the water, the One who pulls us out of sin. To the woman who was waiting for that Savior, Jesus said, “I who speak to you am He; the Messiah you are waiting for is precisely I.” Is Jesus our Savior, or not? Jesus is the Savior of you and me. Jesus came to this earth to save you and me perfectly from sin. Then let us look at the word together on how Jesus, having come to this earth, removed our sins.

It is Matthew 1:21. *“She will bring forth a Son, and you shall*

call His name JESUS, for He will save His people from their sins.” God spoke to Mary through an angel. It is the word that you will bring forth a Son, and you shall call His name Jesus, for He is the One who will save His people from their sins. Long before Jesus Christ came, God also spoke through the prophet Isaiah. *“Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a Son, and shall call His name Immanuel.”* It is a prophecy that God would borrow the body of a virgin, put on the form of a human being, come to this earth, and be with human beings. According to that prophecy, Jesus Christ was born in the land of Judea, in the nation of Israel. Mary was a woman of the tribe of Judah. When the angel appeared and said, “You will bring forth a child, and you shall call His name Jesus,” Mary asked, “How can I, who do not know a man, conceive, and how can I bear a child? Is this not a word that makes no sense?” and the angel answered that it was the almighty word of the LORD, and that her relative Elizabeth had also now conceived a child in her old age. Then Mary obeyed, saying, *“Behold the maidservant of the Lord! Let it be to me according to your word.”* She obeyed, saying, if God is coming to this earth through me, I believe it will be according to Your will; let it be so.

The Holy Spirit is the Spirit who is holy. He is not a human being. In order to save sinful human beings from sin, God Himself had to come as a human being. And His name is Jesus, that is, the Savior. We receive salvation through believing in the name of Jesus. Then, when we believe in the name of Jesus, we must know and believe the fact of how Jesus removed our sins. Let us look at the word. It is Matthew 3:13. *“Then Jesus came from Galilee to John at the Jordan to be baptized by him. And John tried to prevent Him, saying, ‘I need to be baptized by You, and are You coming to me?’ But Jesus answered and said to him, ‘Permit it to be so now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all*

righteousness.’ Then he allowed Him. When He had been baptized, Jesus came up immediately from the water; and behold, the heavens were opened to Him, and He saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and alighting upon Him. And suddenly a voice came from heaven, saying, ‘This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.’”

Why was Jesus baptized by John? God says that Jesus came to this earth and was baptized by John in order to take charge of the sins of all people on His head. He received the baptism at the Jordan River, where water flows. The Jordan River is the river of death. What is baptism? In the Old Testament, one laid hands on the sacrificial lamb and passed on one’s sins to it, and that animal died in the person’s place, and its blood was put on the horns of the altar of burnt offering, and the sinner received the remission of sin. The wages of sin is death, so for a person to receive the remission of sin, the price of a life must be paid. That is why God, in order to save us human beings, prepared an unblemished lamb or goat as the sacrificial offering, and ordained that when a person with sin laid hands on it, the sin would pass on to it. Instead of killing the person, He killed the animal and remitted the person’s sin. This was the mercy of God and the grace of God. In exactly the same way, in this age God Himself sent His only Son, Jesus, to this earth as the Savior, and He promised that by raising up one representative of mankind and having him lay hands on Jesus, all our sins would pass on to Him, and God the Father carried out that promise. In accordance with that carrying out, Jesus came to this earth.

The baptism had to be received at the Jordan River, where water flows. John the Baptist was standing in the water of the Jordan River baptizing, and Jesus went into that water and presented His head to John, who was baptizing, that is, to the representative of mankind. When He said, you baptize Me, John

tried to stop Him, saying, “I need to be baptized by You, so how can I baptize You?” But Jesus said, “*Permit it to be so now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness*” (Matthew 3:15). It is the word that it is fitting to make all people sinless, to fulfill all righteousness. Jesus said to pass on the sins, and John the Baptist passed all the sins of mankind on to the head of Jesus.

Here there is something we must know. One may think, “I did not lay my hands on Jesus directly, so how did my sins pass on?” But because our God is the God of wisdom, there was no need for Him to have each and every person lay hands on Him one by one. If all the more than five billion people were each to lay their hands once on the head of Jesus, all of Jesus’ hair would fall out and He would end up bald. The more sins a person had, the more earnestly he would rub with his hands on that head. Some would even be on the verge of grabbing His hair with one hand and pulling it out. Then Jesus would not merely become bald; His head and His brain would be worn away to nothing. Even though God ordained that the sin would pass on if only one laid hands on Him, if people without faith rubbed so much, the skin would be on the verge of being stripped off entirely. Our God, knowing human weakness, did not use that method, but raised up one representative of all the people of mankind, and he is precisely John, who baptized. Through John He passed all the sins on to Jesus, and Jesus received that baptism. Why did God the Father send Jesus to this earth? All the population that would live from Adam to the end of this earth is swarming here. It means that He sent His Son into the world in order to gather up entirely—the sins these people committed in the heart, the sins committed in action, the sins committed until they die, the sins committed while drunk, the sins committed while sober, the sins committed knowingly, the sins committed unknowingly, in short, all of them, neatly together—and pass them on to the head of

Jesus. So Jesus had to come as the Savior and be baptized by John. Jesus was baptized by John in order to save us from sin.

“Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!”

Now let us look at the Gospel of John. Have our sins all passed on to Jesus Christ, or not? The word baptism refers precisely to the laying on of hands of the Old Testament; it refers to sins passing on, to His having washed away our sins. Because Jesus Himself received all our sins passed on to Him, our sins are washed away. In John 1:29 it says, *“The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, ‘Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!’”* People, look at Jesus over there. He is precisely the Son of God, the sacrificial Lamb promised in the Old Testament, our Savior. He has taken charge of the sins of all the people of the world. The sins have passed on to Him. John, who had baptized Him, testified like this when he saw Jesus coming toward him the next day.

Now, are all the sins of mankind on Jesus, or on us? They are on Jesus. The sins we committed in this world in the heart and in action from age one to age twenty—are those sins on us, or have they passed on to Jesus? They have passed on to Jesus. Then have the sins of the world committed from age twenty-one to age forty passed on to Jesus Christ, or not? They have passed on. Because they have passed on, Jesus is groaning as He carries that heavy sin. How heavy it must have been! Carrying the sin of the world, where does He go? He goes to receive the punishment on the Cross. The wages of sin is death, so instead of our dying, He received all our sins passed on to Him and is judged on the Cross in our place. That was the just judgment of

God, and that was the love of God that saves us. Do you believe? From age forty-one to age ninety-nine, or even if one lives to age one hundred fifty, the sins committed during that time are also sins committed in the world. Have these sins passed on to Jesus Christ, or not? They have passed on. Sins committed knowingly, sins committed unknowingly, big sins, small sins, sins this big, sins this small, sins committed in hiding, sins that only oneself knows, sins that look somewhat all right—whatever the sin, they have all passed on. God says, “*Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!*” (John 1:29). God says that Jesus took away the sin of the world.

When did all the sins of you and me pass on to Jesus Christ? They passed on about two thousand years ago, when He was baptized at the Jordan River, and Jesus, carrying all those sins, went toward the Cross for three years. What is the most important thing here? What is important is not whether our conduct is right, whether we did well or poorly at dawn prayer, whether we gave much in tithes or not, whether we did much all-night prayer or not. We are sinners who, having fallen into sin as if falling into water, cannot help but live all our lives floundering in sin; and what is important is whether or not Jesus came as our Savior for such people as us and received our sins passed on to Him through John the Baptist, whether or not He took responsibility for them, whether or not He took charge of them. Depending on whether we know this fact, our faith can become right faith or it can become wrong faith. By knowing and believing the fact that our sins have passed on, we come to know and believe the fact that we have no sin, and we come to believe in Jesus as the Savior. If we believe without knowing this fact, it all comes to nothing. Like Sunjong a moment ago, who went on the errand carrying only a basket and came back without knowing what it was for, if we believe without knowing

Jesus, it is a wasted trip. So we must know and believe at this very moment. We must believe. Do you understand?

When I was born, it was about 1,900 years after Jesus came to this earth, and since Jesus took charge of my sins with His baptism when He was thirty years old, He has already taken away all my sins. Jesus paid for my sins in advance. Knowing what sins I would commit after being born in the future, loving me and loving all of us mankind, so as to send us not to hell but to heaven, He drew them all forward in advance, bore our sins, and paid the price on the Cross. By believing now this fact that was already accomplished long ago, the fact that Jesus came to this earth and loved us and saved us, and by hearing that news, we come to know and believe and give thanks that we have no sin, and we come to obtain salvation by believing with the heart and confessing with the mouth.

We come to receive the remission of sin by faith. Do you believe? Do you and I have sin, or not? Jesus Christ took away the sin of the world. Then what is the world? Are our descendants people of the world, or not? Even the grandsons and granddaughters who have not yet been born are people of the world. We must know the meaning of the word world. Our ancestors are the world, our descendants are the world, and our present is the world.

When we accept just what God has said, that word becomes ours

Dear beloved saints, today we are telling you the word that the life of faith must be lived in the spirit, that it must be lived with faith in God, and that we must believe in God after knowing and believing that God has removed our sins. Do not live the life

of faith in which you strive, trying to keep and failing to keep today, failing to keep tomorrow, and failing to keep the day after and the day after that, the law that God gave us not to keep but to make us realize and know sin—the life of faith absurdly deceived by the devil. Fundamentally, God gave the law to make us realize and know sin, and to make us sinless He sent His Son to this earth, had Him baptized by John, had Him take charge of all our sins, and had Him receive our judgment on the Cross for us, and He said, It is finished. We must know that God has spoken so that we may know and believe this gospel of God, the love of God and the salvation of God, by which He loved us and made us perfectly sinless.

We must know and believe. Do you believe? Let us look up just a few verses of the Bible on where Jesus went carrying the sin of the world, and then close. It is John 19:30. *“So when Jesus had received the sour wine, He said, ‘It is finished!’ And bowing His head, He gave up His spirit.”* It is finished. Jesus received all our sins passed on to Him through the baptism He received from John at the Jordan River, and as He was nailed to the Cross and died, He said, It is finished, and bowed His head and died. The words It is finished mean, it has all been removed, all removed, entirely removed. It means that He completely finished the work of removing all the sins of this world. Our Lord speaks. God says that it is finished, that He has removed all sin, that He has removed the sins of me and of all the people of mankind. Do you believe?

Let us look at Hebrews 10:1. *“For the law, having a shadow of the good things to come, and not the very image of the things, can never with these same sacrifices, which they offer continually year by year, make those who approach perfect.”* In the age of the law, when one sinned, one brought a lamb and laid hands on it and passed on the sin, and the next day one sinned

again and brought another and laid hands on it and passed it on; repeating this every day in that way was not something that could work. Being lazy would not do either, repenting every day would not do, and the law would not do.

So God says in chapter 10, verse 9. *“Then He said, ‘Behold, I have come to do Your will, O God.’ He takes away the first that He may establish the second. By that will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.”* It goes on to say, *“And every priest stands ministering daily and offering repeatedly the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins. But this Man, after He had offered one sacrifice for sins forever, sat down at the right hand of God, from that time waiting till His enemies are made His footstool. For by one offering He has perfected forever those who are being sanctified.”*

As for the remission of sin, only when we believe the fact that Jesus removed all our sins at one time, that He perfected us forever by one offering, do we go to heaven and become righteous and receive the remission of sin. Do you believe? *“But the Holy Spirit also witnesses to us; for after He had said before, ‘This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, says the LORD: I will put My laws into their hearts, and in their minds I will write them,’ then He adds, ‘Their sins and their lawless deeds I will remember no more.’ Now where there is remission of these, there is no longer an offering for sin”* (Hebrews 10:15–18).

Has our Lord removed the sins of all the people of this world, the sins of you and me, or not? When it says there is remission of these, remission of what does it mean? It means that He has remitted sins and lawless deeds, the sins of all people. Then would there still be an offering to be made for sin? Does it mean that there remains something for which we must plead again,

saying, God, please forgive me? No. The wages of sin is death, but our Lord received all the judgment for that sin on the Cross for us. He received all our sins passed on to Him through the baptism He received from John at the Jordan River and took them all away. *“Where there is remission of these, there is no longer an offering for sin.”* Faith is believing what God has said. When we accept just what God has said, these words that He spoke—*“Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!”* *“thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness”* (Matthew 3:15), *“By the law is the knowledge of sin,”* *“where there is remission of these, there is no longer an offering for sin”* (Hebrews 10:18)—become ours. God has said so.

The life of faith must be lived in the spirit

By believing this word we have received the gift of God, and through the grace of God we have become the children of God. Do you believe? It is said that with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. Do you believe with the heart? Then speak it with your mouth as well. Have you been saved? Have you received the remission of sin? Yes, we have. Hallelujah, we praise our Lord.

We must live the life of faith in the spirit. We must not live it in the flesh. Going to the church building every day, confessing sins every day, and trying to receive remission every day is living the life of faith in the flesh. That faith is not of the spirit and is not what God gave; it is the life of faith lived by one's own zeal and one's own thoughts. That faith is precisely devilish, and it is a ticket to hell. Whoever wants to believe in God must deny his own thoughts. According to the word that said, deny yourself and take up your cross and follow Me, one

must first deny one's own thoughts. God says that He has saved me. He says that Jesus took away the sin of the world. We must receive the remission of sin by knowing and believing the fact that when He took away the sin of the world, my sins too were included in it, that He took away my sins too. This is the spiritual life of faith. Dear fellow believers, the life of faith must be lived in the spirit. ☒

Sermon 3 by Paul C. Jong

The living water that never lets one thirst again

< John 4:13-26, 4:39-42 >

“Jesus answered and said to her, ‘Whoever drinks of this water will thirst again, but whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him will never thirst. But the water that I shall give him will become in him a fountain of water springing up into everlasting life.’ The woman said to Him, ‘Sir, give me this water, that I may not thirst, nor come here to draw.’ Jesus said to her, ‘Go, call your husband, and come here.’ The woman answered and said, ‘I have no husband.’ Jesus said to her, ‘You have well said, “I have no husband,” for you have had five husbands, and the one whom you now have is not your husband; in that you spoke truly.’ The woman said to Him, ‘Sir, I perceive that You are a prophet. Our fathers worshiped on this mountain, and you Jews say that in Jerusalem is the place where one ought to worship.’ Jesus said to her, ‘Woman, believe Me, the hour is coming when you will neither on this mountain, nor in Jerusalem, worship the Father. You worship what you do not know; we know what we worship, for salvation is of the Jews. But the hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for the Father is seeking such to worship Him. God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth.’ The woman said to Him, ‘I know that Messiah is coming’ (who is called Christ). ‘When He comes, He will tell us all things.’ Jesus said to her,

‘I who speak to you am He.’”

“And many of the Samaritans of that city believed in Him because of the word of the woman who testified, ‘He told me all that I ever did.’ So when the Samaritans had come to Him, they urged Him to stay with them; and He stayed there two days. And many more believed because of His own word. Then they said to the woman, ‘Now we believe, not because of what you said, for we ourselves have heard Him and we know that this is indeed the Christ, the Savior of the world.’”

The woman who met Jesus at the well

The Samaritan woman who lived in the town called Sychar in Samaria had had as many as five husbands. So this woman, ashamed to go about in broad daylight when there were many people around, came to draw water at Jacob’s well, carrying a waterpot on her head, at about noon under the blazing sun, the hour when everyone had gone to take a nap. That day, too, the woman came to draw water at about noon, and someone was sitting by the well. It was Jesus. As this woman came and was drawing water with a bucket, Jesus asked her, *“Give Me a drink.”* When the Samaritan woman looked at this man, His appearance was that of a Jew. The Jewish garment was a blanket-like cloth wrapped around the body and draped over the shoulders, and Jesus was wearing such Jewish clothing. So the woman asked Jesus, *“How is it that You, being a Jew, ask a drink from me, a Samaritan woman?”* The woman said this because, although the Samaritans and the Jews were the same people of Israel, they held a sense of discrimination toward each other. It was because the Jews regarded the Samaritans, a people of mixed blood, as

very lowly, and ignored and despised them. That is why this woman asked Jesus in puzzlement.

Then Jesus spoke about living water, saying, *“If you knew the gift of God, and who it is who says to you, ‘Give Me a drink,’ you would have asked Him, and He would have given you living water”* (John 4:10). Then the woman asked Jesus in return, *“Sir, You have nothing to draw with, and the well is deep. Where then do You get that living water? Are You greater than our father Jacob, who gave us the well, and drank from it himself, as well as his sons and his livestock?”* (John 4:11–12). Jesus answered and told her, *“Whoever drinks of this water will thirst again, but whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him will never thirst. But the water that I shall give him will become in him a fountain of water springing up into everlasting life”* (John 4:13–14). So the woman asked, *“Sir, give me this water, that I may not thirst, nor come here to draw”* (John 4:15), and the Lord said, *“Go, call your husband, and come here”* (John 4:16). When the woman said, *“I have no husband”* (John 4:17), Jesus said to this woman, *“You have well said, ‘I have no husband,’ for you have had five husbands, and the one whom you now have is not your husband; in that you spoke truly”* (John 4:17–18). Then the woman said, *“Sir, I perceive that You are a prophet”* (John 4:19). What the woman was saying to Jesus was, “How do You know that I lived with five husbands? Sir, I perceive that You are a prophet.” Because Jesus knew well about each and every one of us, the woman said, *“I perceive that You are a prophet.”*

Anyway, in this town called Sychar, when Jesus asked the Samaritan woman for a drink, this woman asked how He, being a Jew, could ask her, a Samaritan woman, for a drink. What Jesus said then meant this: “If you really knew who this Jesus is, you would have asked Me for the water that springs up into everlasting life. I am asking you for a drink of water now under

the blazing sun, but if you knew who I am, it is rather you who would have asked Me for the water of everlasting life.” Because our Lord said, *“The water that I shall give him will become in him a fountain of water springing up into everlasting life,”* this woman said, “If there really is such water, please give me some.” When Jesus told her to call her husband, the woman answered that she had no husband, and the Lord said that she had had five husbands and that the one she had now was not her husband either. In conclusion, this woman meets Jesus at the well and is born again. This woman recognizes that Jesus is the Messiah and receives the remission of sin by believing in that Jesus.

We have met the truth with which there is no more spiritual thirst and have received the remission of sin

You and I, too, like this woman, were those who had lived in this world with many things that were not our true husband. What kind of husbands were they? First of all, we thought of money. We used to think that if only we had money, everything would be solved. But that money could not bring everlasting life to our hearts. We also thought of worldly honor as our husband. There was a time when we made honor our husband, dreaming of studying hard, obtaining a doctorate or some government post, and rising in the world to make a name for ourselves, thinking that we really wanted to live with honor once and then die. But not only could honor not be obtained easily, but that honor, too, could neither last forever nor give us eternal life.

At times we thought that pleasure was the best and pursued pleasure, and at times we pursued worldly power. But starting with money, neither honor nor pleasure nor power could solve

the problem of the heart. So we tried forsaking the world and taking refuge in religion, and, thinking that we could fill the emptiness of our hearts through that religion, we even tried sinking deeply into religion, but we could not fill the emptiness of our hearts. As we entered worldly religions and strove to do something well by our own strength, we were those who had lived harboring vain desires.

If we call the first husband money, even while living with that husband, we could not enjoy the washing away of sin or the peace of the soul with that money. As our hearts were still not refreshed but kept feeling empty and hollow, we parted with the first husband called money. The second husband was honor. We married and lived with a husband who really had honor, but that husband called honor could not give satisfaction to our hearts either. After that we tried living with the husband called pleasure, then with the husband called power, then with the husband called worldly religion, and also with the husband called oneself, that is, the self. But all of it was in vain. But just as the Lord said, *“Whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him will never thirst. But the water that I shall give him will become in him a fountain of water springing up into everlasting life” (John 4:14)*, we come to meet the truth of the spiritual living water through the gospel of the water and the Spirit. And as we met the Lord, we came to obtain the water of everlasting life that never lets us thirst again. Our Lord has given you and me, who have received the remission of sin, the water that never lets us thirst again. Our Lord has given you and me, who believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, the living water that never lets us thirst again, which could neither be found nor met within the doctrines of the religions of this world. Now you and I, too, have met our Lord, met the truth with which there is no more spiritual thirst, and received the remission of sin.

Because there is the gospel of the water and the Spirit that never lets us thirst again, there is true peace

Dear fellow believers, what is this fountain of water springing up into everlasting life in our hearts? Our Lord said that He gives a fountain of water springing up into everlasting life; then what, we ask, is this water? We must know about the living water by which we obtain everlasting life.

Dear fellow believers, as we live in this world having come to know and believe the gospel of the water and the Spirit and having received the remission of sin, we must very often meditate on the fact that our Lord has removed our sins. With the faith that believes that our Lord came to this world and, by being baptized, took over our sins once and for all and removed them, we must live always ruminating on the fact that there is no sin in our hearts. By believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, we must not only know that we ourselves have no sin, both before God and to ourselves, but we also know that there is actually no sin in our hearts and give thanks to God. Through our Lord we can fully know and believe, “I have no sin. I am righteous. Having received the remission of sin, there is no sin in my heart.”

Do you have the assurance that there is no sin in your hearts? Every time we think of the fact that our Lord has removed all the sins of our hearts with the word of the gospel of the water and the Spirit, we are drinking the water of everlasting life that the Lord has given us. It is precisely when we believe and recognize in our hearts the truth that our Lord has saved us by removing all our sins once and for all with the word of the gospel of the water and the Spirit that we drink the water of everlasting life that never lets us thirst again. At that time sin really disappears

from the heart, and we must know that this was precisely the faith that drinks the water of everlasting life.

Dear fellow believers, a person who has not received the remission of sin through faith in the gospel of the water and the Spirit cannot say that there is no sin in his heart, and because he has not received the grace of having no sin in his heart, he does not know true salvation. And he suffers because of sin all his life and cannot obtain the assurance that he has been delivered from all sins and become one who has nothing to do with sin at all. Only you and I, who truly believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, really experience that there is no sin in our hearts and come to enjoy true peace.

When we ponder the gospel of the water and the Spirit, we come to know how great and deep a grace of salvation it is that all our sins passed on to Jesus Christ and there is no sin in my heart. Dear fellow believers, not everyone feels this grace of sinlessness. Those who have not yet had their sins washed away by God through the gospel of the water and the Spirit have only sighs, laments, and groans, and have become those who have not even touched the hem of that gospel to know what the true blessing of the remission of sin is.

At times even we, who have received the remission of sin by believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, groan in our outward man. *“O wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death?”* (Romans 7:24). There are times when we are greatly discouraged because of the circumstances or difficulties that have come upon us. But because in our hearts there is the gospel of the water and the Spirit, which springs up into everlasting life and never lets us thirst again, there is true peace. Because we believed in the gospel of the water and the Spirit and received the remission of all our sins once and for all, we have been able to live enjoying the grace that overflows daily

like a river.

However difficult the circumstances we may be in, when we think of ourselves, we rejoice that all our sins passed on to Jesus Christ through His baptism and our sins have disappeared, and that we have therefore become righteous before God. We live feeling in our hearts every day the refreshment that we have not a single sin, that all our sins passed on when Jesus was baptized and so we have not a single sin, and that the sin of the world has disappeared forever. After receiving that remission of sin that the Lord gives, we are those who keep drinking the water of everlasting life while living in this world. Just like the word our Lord spoke, “*will become in him a fountain of water springing up into everlasting life*” (John 4:14), we know in our hearts, “I have become a person without a single sin. I have received the salvation of becoming sinless by receiving the remission of sin through faith in the gospel of the water and the Spirit.” Therefore the water of everlasting life keeps springing up in your hearts and mine. Every day we are drinking the water of everlasting life by faith through the gospel of the water and the Spirit. You and I are drinking the water of everlasting life every day by believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit.

Dear fellow believers, the reason you and I are assured by faith that we have no sin is that our Lord Jesus Christ gave us the gospel of the water, the blood, and the Spirit, and gave the remission of sin and the Holy Spirit as gifts to us who believe in it. Dear fellow believers, the remission of sin given through the gospel of the water and the Spirit is the blessing God has given us and God’s special gift to us.

Dear fellow believers, those who have not received the remission of sin have no peace in their hearts and have no fountain of everlasting life springing up from the depths of their souls. Because they have no water, their hearts are always stifled,

they gasp in thirst, and, like gravel rattling about, a heart of anger seethes within them. Their hearts are like the hearts of the servants of Satan who are in hell. It is not that this world is like hell; it is that one's own heart with sin in it is a heart like hell. But how is it with the person who believes the word of the gospel of the water and the Spirit? Every time we thirst while living in this world, our Lord has given us, with the word of the gospel of the water and the Spirit, a fountain of water springing up into everlasting life. "You have no sin. You are righteous, without sin. You are one who has no sin." The Lord stirs up that refreshment in our hearts.

It is truly so. What has refreshed our hearts and made us sinless is the baptism Jesus Christ received from John and the blood of the Cross. Our Lord has removed our sins, and, dwelling in our hearts as the Holy Spirit, He tells us, "You have no sin. You are one who has no sin." Because of this, you and I live with peace in our hearts.

This, which overcomes difficulties and makes faith grow, is precisely the gospel of the water and the Spirit

Even while we have this peace, there are times when waves rise and tidal waves surge in our hearts because of various matters. There are many times when our hearts are turned upside down. There are times when the heart is overturned as when a tidal wave rises in the sea, but I want you to know the fact that there is truly a spring even at the bottom of the sea. Dear fellow believers, it is said that in a certain sea in this world there is spring water welling up from the bottom of the sea, and that Africans go into that sea and drink the spring water. How can a

person go into the sea and drink spring water? It cannot but be mysterious. It is said that if one goes to a certain spot in the sea, dives, and goes deep into the water, an enormous amount of fresh water is flowing there. Because the Africans know the spring water in that sea, they go deep into the water, drink their fill of that water at that spot, and come up.

The word of the gospel of the water and the Spirit in your hearts and mine is precisely a gospel like that spring water at the bottom of the sea. For those who have received the remission of sin through the gospel of the water and the Spirit, the water of everlasting life and the peace that our Lord has given with the word of truth still ceaselessly moisten our hearts even amid those waves, refresh our hearts, make flowers bloom in our hearts, and make the word of God grow in our hearts.

This, which overcomes difficulties and makes faith grow in any difficulty and confusion, is precisely the gospel of the water and the Spirit of the remission of sin. The gospel of the water and the Spirit is the gift of God given to those who have met our Lord, that is, to those who believe that the Lord has delivered us from all the sins of the world with the baptism He received from John and the blood of the Cross and made us whole.

In your hearts and mine, the water of everlasting life is always springing up together with the gospel of the water and the Spirit. That spring is gushing up in our hearts so that we may not thirst. “You have no sin.” Every time we look into our hearts and confirm that there is no sin in our hearts, and every time the Holy Spirit within us Himself tells us, “You have no sin,” we are actually drinking this water that God has given, which never lets us thirst.

Nothing in this world can refresh our hearts

We must know this. The water called pleasure, too, is refreshing only at the moment we drink it, and after a little time passes we wonder when we ever drank it. So it is with the water called power and the water called honor. When we have power, when we have honor, we are refreshed for a little while. The waters of the world all only look good to people for a little while and give strength to the heart for a little while. After a little while there is nothing. One has to pursue yet again something higher that will refresh the heart. So one tries having still greater money, honor, pleasure, and power, and when even that does not work, what does one do? One goes to a place called religion and begins to drink water.

When one enters a certain worldly religion, the very first thing they make one do is clean the toilets. Making one clean the public toilets, they say, "To make the filth of your heart clean, like this filthy place, offer prayers of repentance every day and do good deeds every day, just as this has to be cleaned every day. Then your heart will be refreshed and all your diseases will be healed." That is the water religion advocates. So when one goes to religion, one concentrates on repenting of one's wrongs, accumulating good deeds, and keeping the law. In the life of worldly religion, when one does good deeds and repents, the heart is a little refreshed. But the moment one puts down that toilet broom and turns around, the heart at once feels hollow.

Dear fellow believers, even within Christianity, those who have not been born again from sin because they do not believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit are all living a vain religious life. They come to church and sing praise before God at the top of their voices, "Holy, holy, holy, merciful Lord, early in the morning we praise our Lord," and give offerings, and offer

prayers of repentance, and then listen to the pastor's sermon. They also listen to sermons that say, "Let us live holy lives. Since we believe in Jesus, let us live doing good deeds." When they drink the water of religion like that for an hour, while listening to the sermon it seems really so and they keep saying amen, amen, but the moment the order of worship ends, there is nothing in their hearts.

Those who are not born again drink water in religion and then feel hollow again. Then where do they go? They drink their own water. "I will make myself happy. There is nothing to trust in. There is no one but me." They try to protect themselves by themselves. Dear fellow believers, one's own self cannot give satisfaction either. There are times when it gives satisfaction, but almost always it gives no satisfaction and only disappoints. Then again, how hollow the heart feels!

Dear fellow believers, nothing in this world can refresh our hearts. It is not a matter of course that you and I, who have received the remission of sin, feel refreshment in our hearts. There is refreshment because we have received the remission of sin through our Lord, because we have received the remission of sin through the gospel of the water and the blood. Dear fellow believers, our Lord raises up an ever-springing fountain in our hearts, moistens our hearts, and makes a river of peace and a river of God's blessing flow in our hearts as a river flowed in the Garden of Eden, yet we fail to feel that grace. Because our hearts are much taken up with worldly affairs and we are busy with them, we often fail to feel this water of peace and water of the remission of sin that the Lord has given.

But we feel it much in quiet times. Also amid storms and amid many tribulations, we very much feel our Lord, who gives the fountain springing up in our hearts. That is why we must give thanks before God. We must know how to give thanks. Dear

fellow believers, that there is peace in your hearts, that your hearts are refreshed, that you have no sin—you must give thanks for this. It is truly something to be thankful for. It is so because this is precisely the water of everlasting life. Dear fellow believers, do you understand? Of course, since we have received the remission of sin, it is natural to feel peace, refreshment, and security, but we must know that even that natural thing is what the Lord has given.

Do not let the spring be blocked

Our Lord gives the water of everlasting life to those who have received the remission of sin. Along with the remission of sin, He adds this water of everlasting life that refreshes our hearts. When God has the word of God preached through the lips of the servants of God who stand at this pulpit, and faith is spread to you through that word, our Lord pours the water of everlasting life into your hearts and moistens them. Dear fellow believers, if a person who has received the remission of sin does not unite with God and does not come to the born-again church and listen to the word, the spring gets blocked. Dear fellow believers, one has to dig the ground deep, but if one stops digging halfway because water comes up after digging a little, then as the spring water rises, sand keeps falling in and gravel comes down, and the spring gets blocked. So although one has received the remission of sin, one feels thirst in the heart because this spring does not well up. If the spring is blocked, you end up dying.

Even if you have received the remission of sin, if you go to a church that has not received the remission of sin and worship there, and listen to the words of that pastor who is not born again, far from being refreshed, your heart is stifled. It is worse than

not having listened at all. What the Holy Spirit within says is, “No, no. That is a lie. It is a fraud. It is sheer fraud.” The Holy Spirit within speaks like that. There are also very young saints who have received the remission of sin but do not feel refreshment in their hearts. And even if they are not young saints, there are saints who feel thirst in their hearts because they do not listen to the word of God often. When someone preaches the word of God, the Holy Spirit in our hearts hears that word and, chiming in, “That word is right,” gives us the spring water welling up in our hearts. That is why we must listen to the word of God. When we listen to the words God has spoken, to what God says, the Holy Spirit within us responds. The Holy Spirit leads us like that.

“Those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth”

Here, this Samaritan woman could not enjoy satisfaction in religion. *“Our fathers worshiped on this mountain, and you Jews say that in Jerusalem is the place where one ought to worship”* (John 4:20). People think that the denomination they belong to is the best. The Samaritan sect says that the Samaritan sect is the best, and the sect of the Pharisees says that the sect of the Pharisees is the best. What did our Lord say to that woman? He said that, neither on this mountain nor on that mountain, the hour is coming when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth.

“God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth” (John 4:24). Dear fellow believers, God is Spirit. He is a holy Spirit. Pneuma, that is, the Spirit who is holy. He said that those who worship that holy God must worship in

spirit and truth. Dear fellow believers, when we truly become souls whose sins of the heart have been cleanly remitted and, as those who have received the remission of sin in our hearts and received the Holy Spirit as a gift, offer worship before God with true faith, God the Father receives that worship and has fellowship and communion with us. This is true worship.

We offer worship before God, give thanks by faith, and make the confession of faith, “Our God has saved us from sin with the water and the blood.” When God says, “Yes, for your sake I have removed all your sins with the baptism of My Son and the blood of My Son’s Cross,” we believe that word and come to offer true worship. God, loving us, has removed all our sins with the water and the blood and made us sinless people, and we must believe in the gospel of the water and the blood of Jesus Christ, receive the remission of all our sins before God, and praise, thank, and glorify our God. The worship we offer to God after coming to know and believe the gospel of the water and the Spirit and having our sins washed away is spiritual worship.

We truly give thanks that God has given us really refreshing water. Dear fellow believers, I want you to know that God has given this refreshing, sinless water of everlasting life into your hearts. And I want you to believe it. And I want you to be truly thankful. Where is the evidence that He has removed your sins and mine with the baptism of Jesus and the blood of the Cross and given salvation to you and me? It is precisely in this water.

The fact that your hearts and mine have become hearts without the sin of the world is the final confirmation. Of course, the word of God is the confirmation, but to truly receive the remission of sin, there must be the word of salvation, and it is not enough merely to know that word; the Holy Spirit must be within, and the Holy Spirit within and our conscience must be assured that there is no sin. When the assurance that there is no

sin is in the heart, one has received the true remission of sin.

We have received something so precious. Yet there are so many times when we fail to feel how precious that so-precious thing is. There are many times when we fight with our outward man. When we pay attention to outward things, there are times when the spiritual and the fleshly fight a great deal within us. Dear fellow believers, I want you to have fellowship with the Holy Spirit who has come into you and with the word of God that has come into you.

Dear fellow believers, we enjoy peace in our hearts because of the water of everlasting life that our Lord has given us. I want you to be sure to remember the gospel of the water and the Spirit.

There is no better preaching of the gospel than the testimony of a person who has received the remission of sin

After this Samaritan woman met Jesus, she left her waterpot. She left her waterpot and hurried into the town. Verse 39 says, *“Many of the Samaritans of that city believed in Him because of the word of the woman who testified, ‘He told me all that I ever did.’”* This woman said that she had met the Messiah. “The One who will save the people of Israel from all sins and from all dangers and tribulations has come. He has come, and I have met Him. He knew everything about me.” The Samaritan woman came into the town and spoke like that. We must listen closely to her testimony.

Dear fellow believers, does Jesus know all about you, or does He not? He knows all. Dear fellow believers, Jesus knows all about what sins we commit and what sins are in our hearts. He has recorded the sins we have committed in this world on our

hearts, that is, on the tablet of our conscience. So we cannot possibly deceive Him. When He says, “What sin did you commit when, and what sin did you commit?” we can only confess plainly, because everything is recorded on the tablet of our conscience. We say that we are sinners before God because, had He not recorded them on the tablet of our conscience, we are all people who would brazenly deny it, saying that it is already past and we do not remember. Our Lord knows even our innermost thoughts.

That is why He has recorded all our sins on each of our hearts so that we can never deny them again. He has recorded them unmistakably with a diamond-pointed iron pen. So we cannot make excuses, and we cannot say that we have no sin. “Yes, you have sin. So you will keenly feel the fact that I am your Savior. I remove your sins with the baptism I received from John and the blood of the Cross. I have removed your sins like this.” Our Lord speaks like that. So we have received this remission of sin through faith. This Samaritan woman went into the town and testified of Jesus Christ, and many people were saved through the testimony this woman gave. Many people came to believe in Jesus.

There is no better preaching of the gospel than the testimony of a person who has received the remission of sin. There is no better method of preaching the gospel than the testimony of how our Lord saved me, of what I was like before I met the Lord and how I received the remission of sin and became sinless. Do not merely tell people to come to our church; if you truly want to preach the gospel of the water and the Spirit to that person, talk with that person and tell how you met the Lord. “There were such and such torments in my heart, there was sin, and my heart was hollow, but our Lord came to this earth, was baptized by John, removed all my sins with the blood of the Cross, and saved

me like this. Jesus bore away the sin of the world with the baptism He received from John. So He saved me. By believing in that Jesus, I have obtained peace in my heart, and now my heart is refreshed.” We must give our testimony of salvation like this. That is the greatest preaching of the gospel.

Hearing this Samaritan woman’s testimony, many people came to Jesus and believed. But after they had come to Jesus as the woman led them and had heard and confirmed His word directly, they no longer believed because of the woman’s word but believed the word Jesus Himself spoke and received the remission of sin.

Dear fellow believers, those who have truly met the Lord must give their testimony of salvation and preach this gospel of the water and the Spirit. The One who saved you is our Lord. That the Lord has saved us with the water and the blood is new and good whenever we speak of it. And since we testify not to boast of ourselves but to preach the gospel of the water and the Spirit and save that soul, serving the gospel is always necessary. Then serving the gospel is not toilsome. Those born again of water and the Spirit must preach the gospel of the water and the Spirit. Just as this Samaritan woman left her waterpot, went and preached the gospel, and then went about her livelihood, we too must preach the gospel of the water and the Spirit. We must proclaim our Lord, who has given us the water of everlasting life. Because we have already received it, we can deliver it to others.

Before we met the Lord while living in this world, we were those whose hearts were hollow

Living in this world, before we met the Lord, our hearts were always hollow. So in the old days I often sang songs like this.

There were many songs, but I often sang a song called “Whale Hunting,” which begins, “Though I drink and sing and dance, this world is full of nothing but sorrow.” I thought a great deal about the meaning of the lyrics of that song. And in the lyrics of a certain singer’s song, “Sitting face to face by a bonfire we have lit,” I also thought a great deal about the meaning of my life. At the end of life, only ashes remain. Nothing remains. I thought that life is something that burns like a bonfire and then, once it goes out, leaves nothing but ashes, which all disappear when the wind blows. I felt keenly in the lyrics of popular songs that my life was just like that, and I lamented over myself.

So, like the song that goes, “Though I drink and sing and dance, my heart is full of nothing but sorrow. Come, let us set out for the East Sea; let us set out to catch a whale,” I thought that I had to set some goal, have some vision, and head toward something. I thought that I had to go to a far, far away, wide, wide place to catch a whale, and that, having been born a man, I had to do something.

At that time, as it happened, the president of those days held power, and the Saemaul Movement, with its slogan “Let us live well, let us live well,” was in full swing. In those days, I could not even sleep at dawn, and if I got up late, I felt like a great sinner. With all the villagers holding brooms and sweeping their yards, saying, “Let us live well,” if I got up late in the morning because I had gone to bed late at night, what an embarrassing situation I found myself in! Looking outside, the village elders had rolled up their sleeves, and the women and children, too, were all sweeping the yards together, and how embarrassing it was to go out! I became a sinner from the morning and was ashamed.

A person must have a reason to live in his heart, and only when there is something worth doing in this world can he do

anything. When there is nothing worth doing, what whale would one go to catch? Though one drinks and sings and dances, one's heart is full of nothing but sorrow. When there is nothing but sorrow filling the heart, what is one supposed to do? Is the heart satisfied if one makes money?

Dear fellow believers, even at a young age I handled quite a lot of money. So I also spent a lot of money. When I was young, while others spent 5 won a day, I spent about 50 won. In those days, with 5 won one could pay 2 won to get into a theater showing a double feature, and after coming out one could buy six candy balls for 2 won, and for a snack called chrysanthemum bread they gave a whole bagful for 1 or 2 won. With 5 won one could spend the whole day. At that time I spent about 50 won a day, so there was no limit to my spending.

Yet even so, there was no satisfaction. Though I spent money to my heart's content and spent still more, there was no satisfaction at all. Wondering where to spend this money, I went here and there, and, wearing leather shoes and bell-bottom trousers and with my hair permed, I even went to dance clubs where people shuffled their feet and shook their bodies. Just as every city has its center of fashion, the city I lived in also had such a street. The student taverns of that street were very famous. From old times only very eccentric students gathered there to dance and so on, but however much I danced and sang and played, there was nothing but emptiness in my heart. When I got up in the morning, only sorrow was weighing down my heart. Nothing remained. It would have been nice if the pleasure of drinking and playing the evening before had lasted until morning, but far from lasting, it was all over with that moment. When I opened my eyes in the morning, I had to make another new pleasure for that day. So I went around here and there a lot with friends looking for fun places, and I spent a lot of money. But

there was nothing.

So in the end I thought of leaving the world and going into the mountains. “There is no more meaning in my staying in this world. I am of no benefit to people, and if this is how it is, it would be better to leave.” At that time I seriously thought a great deal, “Shall I become a Buddhist monk, or shall I become a priest?” There was even a time when I gathered my friends and said, “Hey, it seems you and I are of little use in this world. Let us rather shave our heads and go deep into those mountains. Let us go and just eat our meals, beat the wooden gong, live very quietly, and pass away.” But when I actually thought of going into the mountains to live, I realized that with my temperament I could not live in the mountains. So I gave up going into the mountains to live with a shaved head.

When I looked at priests and nuns, they walked about quietly and did service work, and I had the thought, “If I lived like that, life would be really worthwhile.” But when I looked at myself, I fell far short of being qualified. So I could not even open my mouth and just fretted inwardly.

There was no satisfaction in life. There was no satisfaction in studying, and however many comics I read, there was no satisfaction. I was a comic-book fanatic and enjoyed reading comic books lying under the blanket, and I would pile up comic books higher than my sitting height and read them. Since I read all night every evening, my parents said, “Child, you are using up the oil. Put out the light,” but I still kept the oil lamp lit to the end and, whether it started a fire or not, even brought it under the blanket and read comics. You, too, must have read many comics. People these days seem to read even more. In our old days there were not many comic artists, so only a few kinds came out, but these days how many there are!

The gospel of the water and the Spirit gave me a fountain of everlasting life

But the Lord met me. It was not that He met me fully right then. Only after ten years had passed since I began believing in Jesus did I believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit and receive the remission of sin. Even after I first came into the Christian world, how hard it was! What happened then cannot all be put into words. You, too, must have received the remission of sin while believing in Jesus. Dear fellow believers, know that those who met the truth right away when they believed in Jesus and received the remission of sin are happy. Know, too, that those who received the remission of sin after believing in Jesus for a long, long time without knowing the truth are happy. How many people there are whose hearts are hollow because they have not received the remission of sin to this day! When their hearts are too hollow, they go to the mountains to pray. After they have offered fasting prayers for three days or a week, starving and drinking only water brought in a kettle, their legs tremble and their eyes are sunken. About three days into the fasting prayer, they see ramen floating on the ceiling, with an egg placing itself on top and steam rising from it. “Why, that is clearly the ceiling, so how can there be ramen on that ceiling? And the ramen is hanging upside down. How can ramen be there?” They are not in their right minds. A person who believes in Jesus without knowing the gospel of the water and the Spirit has to keep doing hard things.

“Though I weep I cannot, though I laugh I cannot. Though I shed many tears I cannot, and though I offer many prayers of repentance it does not work.” Dear fellow believers, however much one weeps and wails and offers prayers of repentance, the sins one has committed are not washed away. If sin does not

disappear, it is too painful. How painful it is to offer fasting prayers and forty days of all-night prayers to remove sin! Sin does not disappear by doing so, but since having sin is even more painful than that, they zealously offer fasting prayers and all-night prayers. Try starving for ten days in fasting prayer. A face that is already skin and bones dries up even more. And at that time, how one craves flour-based food! Throughout the fasting prayer one thinks, “Once I finish this fast, I will eat hand-torn dough soup, ramen, and bread.” At that time I craved hand-torn dough soup, ramen, and bread so much that I was almost going mad.

If the fast is to end at twelve o’clock tonight, since one has to keep the time to the very end, from eleven thirty on one stares desperately at nothing but the hands of the clock. It seems a good thirty minutes have passed, but when one looks at the clock only five minutes have passed, and one says, “There are still twenty-five minutes left. How can time go so slowly?” So, to pass the time, one deliberately wakes the person fasting alongside and asks all sorts of things, “Wake up. Where did you live before you came here? Why are you doing this fasting prayer?” and then, thinking that a lot of time must have passed by now, looks at the clock, and only ten minutes have passed. One really comes to the verge of going mad. Why does time drag on like this on the day the fast ends? Now one spends another ten minutes thinking, “What shall I eat when I finish?” Then it is five minutes to twelve, and from then on one cannot possibly do anything else and just watches the clock. Counting one second, two seconds, three seconds, four seconds, a minute passes, then two minutes, three minutes pass, and at last one minute and thirty seconds remain, and finally it is finished. It is safely finished. Setting aside receiving an answer to prayer before God and receiving the remission of sin through this fast, one attaches great

significance to having finished a week of fasting prayer and rushes off in a hurry to eat what one has been craving all that time.

Great significance was placed on having endured hunger, starving, during the fasting prayer. Some could not endure it and would go and eat every night, and some brought water in a kettle and drank it, but that water smelled of rice. When we looked, it was scorched-rice water that was in it. There were really many strange people.

Fasting prayer also differs from denomination to denomination. Some denominations eat other things mixed in even while fasting, and denominations that keep the law strictly really drink only water for a week. After finishing a fasting prayer that leaves one half dead, there is nothing but the sense of achievement at having finished; there is nothing else. "Heavenly Father, having nothing to rely on, I come with my hands raised. If the Lord turns me away, where shall I go?" At that time, since I was hungry, tears came of themselves, but even as I recited such prayers with tears streaming down, there was still only sin in my heart, and there was still only an empty heart. So I was sad. But I met our Lord. I heard the gospel that your sins passed on to Jesus when He was baptized by John, and that Jesus received all the judgment by dying on the Cross. Dear fellow believers, when I came to know the word that the sin of this world had disappeared forever, the world changed.

Dear fellow believers, people talk about salvation carelessly. Because I had searched so much for the word of the remission of sin and longed for it so much, if someone gave me even the tiniest hint, I could understand about ten times as much. And I studied and investigated the gospel of the water and the Spirit, and, dear fellow believers, the gospel of the water and the Spirit is such a clear gospel. The gospel of the water and the Spirit that

Jesus gave us was the fountain of everlasting life of the word He spoke, *“The water that I shall give him will become in him a fountain of water springing up into everlasting life” (John 4:14).* This gospel of the water and the blood gave me a fountain of everlasting life. The moment I confirmed this gospel, all the sins of my heart disappeared, and a fountain sprang up in my heart. The gospel of the water and the Spirit is precisely this gospel that you have received.

Dear fellow believers, do you think little of this gospel of the water and the Spirit? Do you think it is a common gospel? Never. Though many Samaritans were living there, this woman living in this town of Sychar alone met the Lord, and this woman preached the gospel, and a few people met the Lord. A few people met Him in the region of Galilee, and a few people met Him in the town of Sychar. Only one in a thousand, one in ten thousand, received the remission of sin. In fact, when you think about it, it is an extremely rare salvation. Dear fellow believers, this gospel of the water and the Spirit is so precious. We have met the Lord through the gospel of the water and the Spirit. We have drunk the fountain of water springing up into everlasting life through the gospel of the water and the Spirit. I give thanks for the fact that my soul has obtained joy and satisfaction through our Lord’s gospel of the water and the Spirit. I will close the message here. ☒

Sermon 4 by Paul C. Jong

Many more believed because of His word

< John 4:27-42 >

“And at this point His disciples came, and they marveled that He talked with a woman; yet no one said, ‘What do You seek?’ or, ‘Why are You talking with her?’ The woman then left her waterpot, went her way into the city, and said to the men, ‘Come, see a Man who told me all things that I ever did. Could this be the Christ?’ Then they went out of the city and came to Him. In the meantime His disciples urged Him, saying, ‘Rabbi, eat.’ But He said to them, ‘I have food to eat of which you do not know.’ Therefore the disciples said to one another, ‘Has anyone brought Him anything to eat?’ Jesus said to them, ‘My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me, and to finish His work. Do you not say, “There are still four months and then comes the harvest”? Behold, I say to you, lift up your eyes and look at the fields, for they are already white for harvest! And he who reaps receives wages, and gathers fruit for eternal life, that both he who sows and he who reaps may rejoice together. For in this the saying is true: “One sows and another reaps.” I sent you to reap that for which you have not labored; others have labored, and you have entered into their labors.’ And many of the Samaritans of that city believed in Him because of the word of the woman who testified, ‘He told me all that I ever did.’ So when the Samaritans had come to Him, they urged Him to stay with them; and He stayed there two days. And many

more believed because of His own word. Then they said to the woman, ‘Now we believe, not because of what you said, for we ourselves have heard Him and we know that this is indeed the Christ, the Savior of the world.’”

As for what kind of heart the saints who have been saved have, they have a heart that wants to do the will by which the Lord saved us. What is the food of those who have been saved? To do that will, that work—the will by which He saved us and by which He told us to spread the gospel—this is the spiritual food of those who have been saved. It is the word that for those who have received the remission of sin, nothing else is food, but doing the will of the Lord is food.

To receive the remission of sin before God, we must first know that we are sinners

When the Lord was on this earth, He spoke to the Samaritan woman. The Samaritan woman was a woman who had no satisfaction in this world. She had had five husbands and was living with a sixth man, but she had no satisfaction; and then she met our Lord and came to know her own state plainly. She came to know plainly how ugly a being she was. And she met the Lord, the Savior, who is the Prophet. While they met and talked, this woman came to know that Jesus Christ is the Savior, and by believing it in her heart she received the remission of sin. What this woman said was, *“Come, see a Man who told me all things that I ever did. Could this be the Christ?”* (John 4:29). The word is God.

In John 1:1 it says, *“In the beginning was the Word, and the*

Word was with God, and the Word was God.” The word of God tells us everything. Because He is our Master and the One who made us, there is nothing He does not know about us. Jesus met the Samaritan woman and told her all that she had done. “Look at what your state is. You do not obtain satisfaction in this world. You are a sinner. You must meet the Savior. You must obtain eternal life. You must eat the food that, once eaten, never lets you thirst again.” This woman asked whether He was greater than Jacob, and spoke of Jacob, and spoke of the mountain of Samaria, and spoke of the place of worship in Jerusalem. Our Lord said that whoever believes the word of the Lord obtains life. Because the Lord spoke to the Samaritan woman about every part of her, she listened to it all.

Dear fellow believers, who would be the One who tells us about ourselves in detail? It is the Creator who made us, our Lord. Only He who made us knows everything about us. Our Lord told the Samaritan woman everything. “I will give you water that, once you drink it, never lets you thirst again. Go, call your husband.” Our Lord reminded this woman of her sin. When the woman said, “I have had five husbands, and the man I am living with now is not my husband either,” the Lord said that what she said was true. Before giving this woman the food of life, that is, the water of eternal life, our Lord first reminded her, “You are a sinner. You are one who lives without obtaining satisfaction because of sin.” To receive the remission of sin before God, we must first know that we are sinners. We must know that we are evil sinners. It means that there is nothing to expect from ourselves. Our Lord says that a human being is a lump of sin.

There is food of which you do not know

This woman met the Lord. While this woman and Jesus were talking, Jesus' disciples were hungry and had already gone into the town to buy something to eat. Jesus and this woman were talking alone by the well; to put it plainly, they were having fellowship in the gospel. Then the disciples came. To put it in today's terms, they had bought bread and drinks. Having bought them and come, they wondered inwardly, "How is it that You are talking with that woman? Is that woman not a Samaritan woman? Samaritan women do not even associate with Jews, so how is it that You are talking with her? Lord, let us eat." Our Lord said in verse 32, *"But He said to them, 'I have food to eat of which you do not know.' Therefore the disciples said to one another, 'Has anyone brought Him anything to eat?' Jesus said to them, 'My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me, and to finish His work.'"* (John 4:32–34). It means that when our Lord came to this earth and finished all the work the Father sent Him to do, that became His food of life and He was full. It means that it became the food of the spirit.

When are we, the righteous who have been born again, full? When we sufficiently carry out the work of spreading the gospel that our Lord has entrusted to us, there is a greater satisfaction than when we eat the food of the flesh. Dear fellow believers, when we make booklets, spread the gospel, hold book exhibitions, and do the Lord's work, there is satisfaction in our hearts. It was so with our Lord as well. The disciples were hungry in the flesh, but when our Lord accomplished the work the Father told Him to accomplish, it became food in His heart and He was full. It is so with all of us who are righteous. I, too, feel this satisfaction very much. It has nothing to do with whether there is food in our refrigerator at home or whether there

is rice. Of course it would be good if there were plenty. But even if I have nothing at all, if I meet a soul and that person hears the gospel, receives the remission of sin, and rejoices and becomes a child of God, I cannot tell you how glad and full and satisfied my heart is.

Dear fellow believers, when we do much of the Lord's work, our hearts are full. Just as a cow has several stomachs, the righteous also have two stomachs. There is the stomach of the flesh and the stomach of the heart, and the stomach of the heart is full. It means that the heart is satisfied. But most people do not know this satisfaction. People may say, "Why do you strive so in a tiny church?" but honestly, these days I am very hungry.

When I think of the work of spreading the gospel to the whole world, I am truly full. When the Lord came to this earth, the disciples were at their wits' end with hunger, but our Lord, while spreading the gospel to the Samaritan woman, was already full in His heart. So when the disciples said, "Rabbi, eat. Teacher, please eat some of this," the Lord said, "I am full. I have food of which you do not know. When I finish the work the Father has given Me to do, My heart is satisfied."

Dear fellow believers, it is so with us who are righteous. Our Lord was satisfied in His heart when He did His work. That Lord is in our hearts through the Holy Spirit. Even now the Lord is within us, and as for when He is satisfied and full, He greatly rejoices when we do the work of God and serve the Lord. He is satisfied. This is the food of the spirit. With what are the righteous satisfied? They are satisfied when they serve God. This food is food that the people of the world do not know. The people of the world are satisfied only when they eat bread, but we who are righteous are full and satisfied only when we do the work of God. This is because our Lord is within us.

Because the Lord, who lived on this earth for thirty-three

years, now dwells in our hearts as a holy Spirit, the Lord who appears in the Bible and the Lord who is within us are one and the same. The Lord who came to this earth came into our hearts and dwells there when we receive the remission of sin. Why are we satisfied? When the gospel is spread, we are satisfied. A person who does not do the Lord's work is very poor. But a person who serves the Lord is very rich in heart. He is rich in the flesh as well. This is the secret of becoming rich. That is why we want to serve the Lord so much that we cannot bear it.

However large a chapel may be, what satisfaction is there in that? How satisfying it is to spread the gospel to souls and share the food with them! When someone receives the remission of sin, our hearts feel very good. The reason is that, because the will of the Lord has been accomplished, the Holy Spirit who is within us rejoices. When there is a brother who has received the remission of sin, why are we glad, too? It is because the Lord who saved that brother is within us as well, and because that salvation was His will and His desire, the Lord who is within us rejoices. That is why our hearts are glad. When the people of the world oppose the gospel, why are our hearts wounded? We could simply have nothing to do with those people, but our hearts ache and we feel pity for them. It is because the Lord is within us.

When one receives the remission of sin, the Holy Spirit comes as a gift

When we receive the remission of sin, the Holy Spirit comes into our hearts. If we look at Acts 2:38 and 39, it says, *"Then Peter said to them, '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. For the promise is to you*

and to your children, and to all who are afar off, as many as the Lord our God will call.’” If one knows and believes in one’s heart that Jesus Christ took charge of all one’s sins by being baptized by John, the Holy Spirit comes into the heart as a gift. One rejoices through the Holy Spirit. When Jesus Christ came to this earth and was baptized by John, did your sins and mine pass on to Him, or did they not? They all passed on. The person who believes this has been baptized by John. Dear fellow believers, our Lord had all our sins passed on to Him by being baptized in the Jordan River, and received the judgment on the Cross. By believing that, we received the remission of sin. Because our sins passed on to the Lord and the Lord died in our place, because He received the judgment for us, we received the remission of sin. When one receives the remission of sin, one receives the Holy Spirit as a gift.

The Holy Spirit does not come because a person cries out, “Lord! O Holy Spirit!” There are the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, and the Holy Spirit is a holy Spirit. He is God. Jesus Christ is God who is the Word, and His Father is God the Father. There are three Persons, and They are the same God. But to say to God the Holy Spirit, “Holy Spirit, please come. How are you?” is utterly absurd. Is God a human being? Does He come in and go out when you say, “How are you, please come in”? The word says, *“Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins”* (Acts 2:38).

When Jesus was baptized by John, our sins passed on to Him, and because our sins passed on to the Lord, the Lord received the judgment in our place on the Cross. Therefore we have no sin. We received the remission of sin through faith. The Holy Spirit seals the hearts of those who have received the remission of sin. Because there is no sin, He can come into the heart and take His seat. It means that He can be seated there. He can never

enter into a person who has sin in his heart. He is not One who comes in when told to come in and goes out when told to go out. The Holy Spirit is not a servant. It is the word that one should receive the remission of sin, and then the Holy Spirit comes as a gift into the person who has received the remission of sin. It is the word that God the Father removes our sins through His own Son, and gives the Holy Spirit as a gift to those who have received the remission of sin by believing in His Son. The Holy Spirit is a gift. He comes as a gift. People who believe falsely say, "Holy Spirit, please come." Is the Holy Spirit a neighbor's child who comes in when called? Does God come in because a human being calls Him? God cannot take His seat where there is sin in the heart, so He removes that sin entirely and takes His seat within that heart, and He said, "I am in you, and you are in Me, dwelling together."

For our Lord to dwell within us, we must receive the remission of sin. Only when we know and believe that our Lord has removed our sins can the Lord dwell together with us. The Holy Spirit comes as a gift into the hearts of those who have received the remission of sin. Even receiving the remission of sin is grace. The Holy Spirit comes only to the person who has received the remission of sin. So there is no judgment for the one who has the Spirit of Christ, and there is judgment for the one who does not have the Spirit of Christ. Seeing this word, I cannot tell you how many false people there are in this world and how many people believe wrongly. They make a commotion, making a noise and speaking in tongues that they do not know, but the Holy Spirit does not do so. The Holy Spirit does not make a person speak words that he himself does not know.

We are the evangelists of the gospel

What is the work our Lord did when He came to this earth? Is it not the work of removing the sins of souls? The Lord removed the sins of souls, and He wants us to spread this work to people like the Samaritan woman. When that Samaritan woman received the remission of sin, our Lord said, “I have food of which you do not know,” and we, too, have this food. When someone receives the remission of sin, we rejoice. Our Lord said in verses 35 to 38, *“Do you not say, ‘There are still four months and then comes the harvest’? Behold, I say to you, lift up your eyes and look at the fields, for they are already white for harvest! And he who reaps receives wages, and gathers fruit for eternal life, that both he who sows and he who reaps may rejoice together. For in this the saying is true: ‘One sows and another reaps.’ I sent you to reap that for which you have not labored; others have labored, and you have entered into their labors.”* He is speaking to those who spread the gospel. Looking out over the wide fields, our Lord said, lift up your eyes and look at the fields, for they are already white for harvest; he who reaps receives wages and gathers fruit for eternal life.

We are those who reap what we have not labored for, that is, the work by which our Lord removed all sins. We are harvesters. God planned it, He carried it out through Jesus Christ, the Holy Spirit stood as the guarantee, and He promised through the prophets of the Old Testament that He would save human beings. He spoke of all these things. Our Lord came to this earth and removed all sins exactly as He had said. But we did nothing at all. In the old days the servants of God took great pains to preserve the Bible. The Bible was written over 1,600 years, and there were many people who tried to destroy it, and among the kings of Judah there was even one who burned the word of God in the fire. But

the servants of God heard the voice of God, wrote it down again, kept it well, and handed it down to the people of Israel. They labored a great deal. Compared with that, our labor is nothing.

We have only to reap the work by which our Lord has removed the sins of all the people of this world. To tell people, “This is how the Lord removed your sin”—this is reaping. It says that both he who sows and he who reaps may rejoice together. It says that others have labored, and you have entered into their labors. Our Lord and the prophets of the Old Testament labored a great deal. But what labor is there of ours? What did we labor at in receiving the remission of sin? We only spread with our mouths the work the Lord has done, the work by which He removed all sins, and reap. But some people cannot do this work. They try to remove sin in the present tense. They say that if you have sinned, you must repent. This is their own effort. It is wrong. Our Lord has removed all the sin of the world. We do not labor; we have only to reap the work by which the Lord has removed all the sin of the world. This is what a harvester is. These are the evangelists of the gospel.

As for the gospel, the gospel is that our Lord has removed all the sin of the world. The gospel was accomplished long ago. What did we labor at? Nothing. “*And he who reaps receives wages, and gathers fruit for eternal life*” (John 4:36). It says that he has already received wages. Those who spread the gospel are truly happy people. Look at me. How happy I am! When I go out and preach the word, I do not fret as the pastors of the world do. To preach one sermon, I do not spread commentaries all over the floor and copy a little from here and a little from there. It is said that a certain pastor in our country who is known for preaching well memorized foreign sermons by heart and preached them just as they were. Later it came out. Since he came from a prestigious school, he had a good memory, but he

was not a person who had received the remission of sin. He shone brightly for a moment and then disappeared.

It is truly good for us. We only do the reaping. We only make into literature what the Lord has done, spread it with our mouths, and deliver what the Lord has already done. This work is done by those who have truly received the remission of sin, by the servants of God. If we received the remission of sin by repenting, we would have to repent always. But that is not so. We must turn from what is wrong and believe and follow the word; but as for the work of removing our sins, our Lord has accomplished it all. The Lord has done all the work. There is a standard by which we can discern false evangelists: if someone says that one receives the remission of sin by offering prayers of repentance, it means that he is a swindler.

When we deliver the written word, souls receive the remission of sin

Let us look at the word. In verses 39 to 42 it says, *“And many of the Samaritans of that city believed in Him because of the word of the woman who testified, ‘He told me all that I ever did.’ So when the Samaritans had come to Him, they urged Him to stay with them; and He stayed there two days. And many more believed because of His own word. Then they said to the woman, ‘Now we believe, not because of what you said, for we ourselves have heard Him and we know that this is indeed the Christ, the Savior of the world.’”* Here we must know how important the word of the Lord is. At first the Samaritan woman spoke to the Samaritans. “Look, everyone. There is One who told me everything. He is the Savior. Come and see.” She left her waterpot and went into the village. She did the work of gathering

people together first. She gathered them and brought them before the Lord. The Lord Himself spoke. So the people heard the word and received the remission of sin. And so afterward the Samaritans say, "It is not because of what you said that we believe; it is because of what the Lord Himself said that we have believed that Jesus is the Savior of the world."

When we spread the gospel, through personal relationships we can lead people to come and see. After that, we show them the word of Jesus, and when we let them hear the written word, saying, "This is the word of God. This is how God has removed your sin. This is how evil God says you are," souls receive the remission of sin. The evangelists of the gospel must spread the gospel in this way. However well we speak and however good our ways and means are, it is in vain. When we tell them the written word, people receive the remission of sin. They receive the remission of sin because of the word.

Preaching the gospel cannot be done with one's own wisdom. Let us look at verse 42. *"Then they said to the woman, 'Now we believe, not because of what you said, for we ourselves have heard Him and we know that this is indeed the Christ, the Savior of the world.'"* It is that by hearing directly from our Lord they came to know that the Lord is the Savior of the world. It means that they believed. When we, too, spread the gospel, do we spread it with our own wisdom, with our fine speech, with our denomination? No. We must first form a personal relationship, and after that we must spread it with the word. "Look, does the word not say that He took away the sin of the world? Look, is it not written that at the Jordan River it was fitting to fulfill all righteousness? Is not all righteousness the removing of your sin?" Because there is power in the word of God, when one hears the word of God one receives the remission of sin. Sin disappears. Why is that? It is because this word is God. It is because we are

spreading the work the Lord has already done.

It is not that Jesus is removing sin now; it is that we are spreading the word that Jesus removed sin long ago. When one hears this word, because there is power in the word, it drives the evil spirit out of the heart. It puts the heart that was in confusion back in exact order. The word sets things in order. The word makes one know the truth.

When we spread the gospel, we must deliver the written word. Therefore people receive the remission of sin. We become workers of righteousness. We spread the written word. We must spread the gospel in that way. How do we believe in the Lord? We believe because of the written word of the Lord. Is it a matter of our denomination? No. It is the word of truth that never changes. We received the remission of sin because of the word that does not change, in the past or now or forever. Do not carelessly say that the translation of the Bible is wrong. One cannot receive the remission of sin by doctrine. One cannot receive the remission of sin by a denomination either. Only when we spread the word exactly do people receive the remission of sin. We must learn how to preach the gospel. Do you perhaps feel a burden about preaching the gospel because you do not speak well? Some people speak well. But that is not important. Depending on how well one knows and believes the word of the Lord, and on how much one testifies of this word, souls either receive the remission of sin or do not. It is decided here. It is decided by whether one knows rightly or does not know rightly, whether one believes rightly or does not believe rightly.

Dear fellow believers, today in John chapter 4 we are learning what the work of preaching the gospel is and what the satisfaction of our hearts is. We know that there is satisfaction when we do the Lord's work and serve Him. Knowing that souls receive the remission of sin not through skill in speech but when

we testify of the written word, we must become those who spread the gospel. We must have faith. One may say, "I have not believed in Jesus long, so I am not good at it." But if one delivers to another person exactly the word by which one received the remission of sin oneself, that person, too, receives the remission of sin. If the other person attacks us and we have nothing to answer, we can come back and learn. If the other person is sincere, we deliver it just as it is, and if that person simply believes it as it is, he receives the remission of sin. He receives the remission of sin just as you and I did. If one does not meet a person who spreads the word just as the word says, one cannot receive the remission of sin. It says that He is the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world, but the people of the world say that He is the Lamb of God who takes away only original sin. They say that He took away original sin but did not take away personal sins. Because they are taught so, because they do not believe according to the word, they remain sinners forever, however much they hear. Even after believing for a hundred years, they are sinners.

Though the history of Christianity in our country is a hundred years, church members still say that they are sinners. There are many strange people. They have believed from their mother's womb, and now, at eighty, they are still sinners. What is that? If they had believed by the word, they would already have received the remission of sin and grown much spiritually. And there would have been countless people under them who had received the remission of sin. But because they themselves have not received the remission of sin, because they have not believed by the word, they are sinners and the people under them are sinners as well. We must know the word. When we spread the word, a change takes place in people. We must know the word rightly and spread it. I will close the message here. ☒

Sermon 5 by Paul C. Jong

Jesus, who accomplished the work of removing our sins

< John 4:27-42 >

“And at this point His disciples came, and they marveled that He talked with a woman; yet no one said, ‘What do You seek?’ or, ‘Why are You talking with her?’ The woman then left her waterpot, went her way into the city, and said to the men, ‘Come, see a Man who told me all things that I ever did. Could this be the Christ?’ Then they went out of the city and came to Him. In the meantime His disciples urged Him, saying, ‘Rabbi, eat.’ But He said to them, ‘I have food to eat of which you do not know.’ Therefore the disciples said to one another, ‘Has anyone brought Him anything to eat?’ Jesus said to them, ‘My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me, and to finish His work. Do you not say, “There are still four months and then comes the harvest”? Behold, I say to you, lift up your eyes and look at the fields, for they are already white for harvest! And he who reaps receives wages, and gathers fruit for eternal life, that both he who sows and he who reaps may rejoice together. For in this the saying is true: “One sows and another reaps.” I sent you to reap that for which you have not labored; others have labored, and you have entered into their labors.’ And many of the Samaritans of that city believed in Him because of the word of the woman who testified, ‘He told me all that I ever did.’ So when the Samaritans had come to Him, they urged Him to stay with them; and He stayed there two days. And many

more believed because of His own word. Then they said to the woman, ‘Now we believe, not because of what you said, for we ourselves have heard Him and we know that this is indeed the Christ, the Savior of the world.’”

Those who heard the word of Jesus were saved

Today we are going to share the word about the Samaritan woman. Since the word about this Samaritan woman goes on and on in the Gospel of John and does not come to an end however much we read, today we have read all the Scripture passages in which the Samaritan woman appears. Next time the Samaritan woman will not appear.

While the Samaritan woman was conversing with the Lord, the Lord told her everything about this woman. The Samaritan woman was astonished. “How do You know about me? Since He knows about me better than I do, this man is a prophet.” Then, thinking, “Could this be the Christ who was to come, the Messiah?” she left her waterpot, went to the people of the town, and said, “People, I have met the Messiah we have been waiting for. Come, see. Come and hear.” So many people came, heard the word, met Jesus, and were saved. But though the people of this town had at first come because she told them to come and see, they asked Him whether He would not stay with them, and as Jesus stayed with them for two days and kept preaching the word, the people of the town said to the Samaritan woman, “We believe not because you told us, but because, as a result of hearing the word directly from Jesus, we have come to believe in our hearts, and we believe that Jesus is indeed the Savior of the world.”

The passage concludes like this. When we preach the gospel,

we sometimes preach using illustrations, but those are told to help understanding; in the end, believing in Jesus is that the word Jesus spoke enters the heart, and by believing that word the person receives the remission of sin.

Because it is conveyed through the word how Jesus took charge of that person's sins with the baptism He received from John, and the fact that He received the judgment on the Cross in that person's place, the word says that those who heard the word of Jesus receive the remission of sin through the word of Jesus.

So it is with you and me. It is not because I preach fluently and well, but because Jesus is saying, through the word of the passage, that He took charge of our sins with the baptism He received from John, and as you hear that word, hold on to that word, and believe, your sins disappear from your hearts.

God who appears through the word

Jesus is God who is the Word, who created the heavens and the earth by His word. He Himself made the universe by His word, promised by His word, came to this earth in human flesh according to His word, was baptized by John, died and rose again, had the word written down, and had this word preached to people, and so removed the sin in the hearts of you who believe this word. The word says that Jesus has cleanly removed the sin in your hearts with the word of the baptism He received from John, removed the judgment you were to receive with the word of the Cross, and become your God and Savior through the word.

So this Gospel of John speaks in great detail about God who is the Word. It said that the Word is God. God is Spirit. It said, *"God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in*

spirit and truth” (John 4:24). But the apostle John speaks of God who is the Word. That word is also right. Although God is Spirit, when He appears to us He does not appear as a spirit but appears through the word, and so the Word is God. That Word came to this earth in the flesh, and so He is God who is the Word.

Then how does this work? In the Bible there are many scenes in which Jesus acts by His word. The centurion, too, said, “*Only speak a word*” (Matthew 8:8), and his servant was healed by the word. When they actually went and saw, he had been healed at that very hour. How does Jesus appear to us? He appears through the word. He speaks to us through this word written in the Bible and works through the word. Therefore we reach the conclusion that we receive the remission of sin by believing this word, become the children of God through the word, become the workers of God through the word, preach the gospel through the word, and go to the kingdom of heaven through the word.

There is food of which you do not know

Jesus had been talking with the Samaritan woman until then. When the disciples of Jesus came and saw, Jesus was talking with a Samaritan woman. Ordinarily, Jews do not talk with Samaritans. Still less do they talk with a woman. The disciples, while going along with Jesus, had gone into the town to buy something to eat. In today’s terms, they had gone to a dumpling shop and bought dumplings and gone to a store and bought food and come back.

When the disciples came to Jesus, saying that they had bought food, and were about to settle down, Jesus was talking very seriously with some woman. It was such a serious conversation that they could not cut in, and this woman left her

waterpot, went into the town, and said to the people, “Come, see. There is a man who tells everything about me. Come, see,” and the people of the town flocked from here and there and came to Jesus.

So the disciples of Jesus urged Jesus to eat, but Jesus answered their urging Him to eat, “*I have food to eat of which you do not know*” (John 4:32). So the disciples then said to one another, “*Has anyone brought Him anything to eat?*” Jesus said, “*My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me, and to finish His work*” (John 4:34). He said that completing, realizing, accomplishing, and finishing the Father’s work was His food. And He said, lift up your eyes and look all around; the grain has turned white and the time to harvest has already come; the time to gather in has come. Around us there are fields that have ripened golden and are ready to be reaped. He said, those who harvest now are harvesting what you have not labored for; you are harvesting what others have already done; and so you rejoice together. Those who harvest receive the reward of the harvest, know the way of the kingdom of God that leads to eternal life and walk that way, and are in the midst of harvesting, gathering and bringing in the grain of eternal life.

They come to rejoice with the joy of harvesting. Those who harvest have come to rejoice arm in arm. Sowing seed and harvesting is a right thing. He said, is it not in your proverb that one who did not sow seed harvests? In some cases there is much to harvest even though we have not labored.

And He said, do you not rejoice together? Such an age has now come. After Jesus came to this earth, since the Lord, by being baptized by John the Baptist, took charge of all the sins of us mankind with the word of baptism, took charge of your sins and mine, washed away your sins and mine with the word of baptism, and received all the judgment for your sins and mine

with the word of the Cross, there are now so many who will obtain salvation. All we have to do is convey this and harvest.

He said that it has now come to such a state, that He has food of which you do not know, that the work He does having come to this earth is to harvest people spiritually and to accomplish the will of the Father, to realize it, to complete it fully, and that this is His food.

But the disciples of Jesus had only bought food for the flesh and come back, and with no interest in the word Jesus had shared with the Samaritan woman, they were subtly hinting that they should eat quickly.

There are many souls to be harvested

As the Samaritan woman saw it, the One talking with her was not merely a prophet but the Messiah. There was not a single thing about her that He did not know. When people of our country go to a fortune-teller to have their fortune told, and the fortune-teller says, “Your husband is having an affair,” since that is exactly the problem they went there for and the fortune-teller says so, they think the fortune-teller has real powers and lavish money on him. And when they ask what they should do, the fortune-teller tells them to attach this talisman to the husband’s underwear, and then he will part with that woman—that is the kind of thing they say. But the nation of Israel is not such a nation.

When the people of the Samaritan town met Jesus, He told them things in detail, as we do today. So they believed and were saved. Jesus is the One who came to accomplish the will of God the Father on this earth, and by accomplishing it He obtained satisfaction and became spiritually full. Dear fellow believers, so it is with us, too. There is much to harvest and gather in. In

another Gospel there is the word telling us to pray that laborers be sent out to harvest. I believe we, too, must pray like that.

We now have many souls to harvest. When I look at the whole world, I estimate that the souls to whom we must preach the gospel number about three billion. Those who do not believe in Jesus at all cannot be helped, but those who say they believe in Jesus and are now deceived by false people—such people number three billion. We must preach to those three billion the word of baptism, the word of the Cross, the word of the gospel of the water and the Spirit, and the word that Jesus is God. Then those who believe are saved.

If we preach just according to this word, we can finish the sermon quickly, but when we talk about things like bogus theological doctrines, we have to go into major surgery. We have to operate on the heart. We have to cut with a knife, asking what is wrong and whether there is a cancerous element inside, take out the cancerous mass inside, suture, and treat. So when such things are dealt with, you must know that the sermon gets longer and sit prepared for it. In today's passage, the Samaritan woman achieved her purpose while talking with Jesus. Because they recognized Jesus as the Messiah and believed in Jesus, the problem of these people was already settled. These people are those who know well that when the Messiah comes, He takes charge of the sins of mankind, takes charge of all their sins too, receives all the judgment, and saves them.

We, too, can know this well. The Lord is the One who came to accomplish the will of Him who sent Him, the One who came to complete it, the One who came to bring it to a close. We must know that, and know and believe that Jesus is the One who came to complete and bring to a close the work of removing your sins and mine. This is extremely important. A person who has sin every day even though he believes in Jesus is a person who

mocks Jesus every day. He is not a person who has met Jesus like the Samaritan woman.

Those who do not believe go to hell because of their own sins

When Jesus told her to call her husband, the woman said, “I have no husband. I lived with five husbands, and the man I am living with now is not my husband either. I have taken someone else’s husband and am living with him now.” The Lord pierced that woman’s sin right on the mark. Telling her to bring her husband means, “Bring your sins to Me. What sins do you have? Bring all those sins to Me. I have come to settle those sins.”

Jesus was baptized by John the Baptist, took charge of sin, and washed sin away. Dear fellow believers, is this right, or is it not? It is right. Your sins, too, whatever sins they may be, all the sins you will commit in the future, and those sins that make you go to hell—Jesus came to this earth and, by being baptized at the Jordan River, took over those sins and washed them away. That He has removed them all means He has accomplished it. He has completed it. He has brought it to a close. We know and believe in that Jesus as our Savior and receive the remission of sin. This is the gospel, and this is salvation. For those who do not believe, it is hell. They go to hell because of their own sins.

The church is where those who have received the remission of sin gather

Dear fellow believers, if you believe, there is something to harvest. There is something to harvest spiritually. The Bible says,

“You shall not muzzle an ox while it treads out the grain.” To a worker who works, the master brings something to eat. When we do the work of God, God gives us something to eat and supplies what we need. The Master is not One who only makes us work without supplying food. We must know that. If you say, “This is a losing business for me. How unfair it is that I devote my youth to the Lord,” go out into the world and look for a way. Even if you go out and work yourself to death, you have to work all your life for the problems of food, clothing, and shelter—eating, sleeping, and dressing—and then depart. That is by no means easy. And you have to defend yourselves, all on your own, against dangers such as human trafficking and organ trafficking.

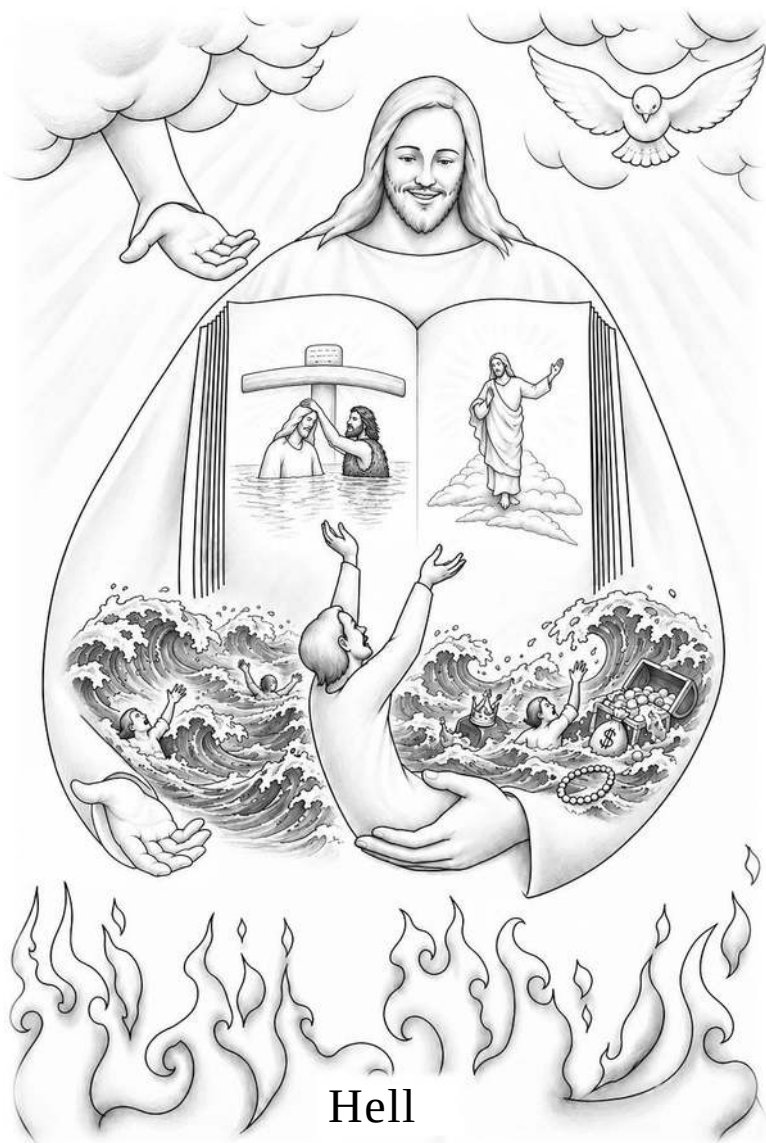
If you believe in the Lord, the Lord protects you, leads you to live the life of a worker, and blesses you. That is why God has established the church on this earth. The church is the ekklesia, that is, the company of those who have been delivered out of the world. The church is the place where born-again people, those who have received the remission of sin by believing the word of the water and the Spirit, the word of baptism, and the word of the Cross, gather to serve the Lord and praise the Lord. This is the church.

A building is not the church. Having built a chapel worth 10 billion won or 100 billion won—that is not the church. The church is the people who, having received the remission of sin by believing the word of baptism and the word of the Cross, gather to fulfill the will of God and live with the purpose of proclaiming the work that Jesus has accomplished. They are saints. They are holy saints. A building standing in this world without the remission of sin is not the church. That is a chapel. It is a place for holding worship. It is merely a place where members of a social club gather and a music hall. I want you to know this and give thanks. I will close the message here. ☒

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CHAPTER

5



Hell

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John Chapter 5 seen from the perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit

In John 5:1–18, why did Jesus save the man who had been sick for thirty-eight years, out of the many sick people lying by the pool of Bethesda?

The reason Jesus went to the man who had been sick for thirty-eight years, out of the many sick people in John 5:1–18, and healed him was to show the mercy of God, who first goes to the sinner who can do nothing by his own strength and saves him.

The man who had been sick for thirty-eight years could not get into the pool by his own strength even when the water was stirred, and there was no one to put him in. Through this man, Jesus showed the fact that salvation is not achieved by human ability, competition, and merit, but by the word and power of Jesus, who came first to the sinner.

Also, by raising him up on the Sabbath, Jesus revealed that He is God, who gives true rest and life to those bound by sin and death.

1. The man who had been sick for thirty-eight years shows the utter helplessness of human beings

Many sick people were lying by the pool of Bethesda. They

believed that whoever got into the pool first when the water was stirred would be healed of his disease, and they waited for that moment.

But the man who had been sick for thirty-eight years could not get in by himself even when he saw the water being stirred.

“Now a certain man was there who had an infirmity thirty-eight years. When Jesus saw him lying there, and knew that he already had been in that condition a long time, He said to him, ‘Do you want to be made well?’ The sick man answered Him, ‘Sir, I have no man to put me into the pool when the water is stirred up; but while I am coming, another steps down before me.’” (John 5:5–7).

This man’s problem did not lie only in the fact that his sickness was of long standing. He could not move by his own strength, and he had no one to help him. He wanted to be healed, but he had no way and no ability to be healed.

This picture shows the spiritual state of mankind under sin. A person may want to live righteously before God, but because of his inborn sinful nature and weakness, he cannot keep the law perfectly. Even if he does good and makes religious efforts, he cannot remove the sin in his heart by himself.

The man who had been sick for thirty-eight years was the person who showed most clearly what human beings are like, unable to save themselves by their own strength. That is why Jesus went to him.

2. He showed that salvation begins not from the sinner’s merit but from the mercy of Jesus

It was not the sick man who went to Jesus. Jesus first saw the sick man lying there, knew that his sickness was of long standing,

and spoke to him.

Nor did the sick man boast of his faith to Jesus or put forward his good deeds. He only confessed that he had no one to help him and that he could not get into the pool by his own strength.

Salvation does not begin from the sinner's merit or ability, but from the mercy of Jesus, who first comes to the sinner and makes him live.

Jesus did not choose the fastest person. Nor did He call the strongest person or the person with the most potential. He went to the person who could not rise by his own strength. Through this He showed to what kind of person the grace of God comes.

The mercy of God comes to the person who knows the fact that he is a sinner, admits that he cannot escape from sin and judgment by his own deeds, and seeks the salvation of Jesus.

3. The reason He asked, “*Do you want to be made well?*”

Jesus already knew the sick man's circumstances, but He asked him, “*Do you want to be made well?*” Through this question He made the sick man confess with his own mouth his desperate need and his helplessness.

The sick man did not answer only, “I want to be made well.” He said that he had no one to put him into the pool, and that while he was coming, another stepped down before him.

Three facts are contained in this answer.

— I want to be made well.

— But I cannot get in by my own strength.

— And I have no one to help me.

This is the confession of a sinner who needs a Savior. Even if a sinner wants to remove the sin of his heart and enter the

kingdom of God, he cannot do so by his own strength. He needs a Savior who will wash away his sin and deliver him from judgment.

With this question Jesus set the heart of the sick man before his own helplessness and his need for salvation.

4. He raised him up not by the water but by the word of Jesus

“Jesus said to him, ‘Rise, take up your bed and walk.’ And immediately the man was made well, took up his bed, and walked. And that day was the Sabbath” (John 5:8–9).

The sick man thought that his sickness could be healed only if the water was stirred and someone put him into the pool. But Jesus did not wait for the water to be stirred, nor did He call someone to put the sick man into the pool.

Jesus said, *“Rise, take up your bed and walk.”* Then the man who had been lying there for thirty-eight years was immediately made well, rose up, and walked.

In the word of Jesus there is the power of life that raises up the sick. Jesus is God, who created the heavens and the earth by His word, and He is the One who makes the dying live by His word and gives new life to souls dead in sin.

What the sick man had relied on for a long time was the water and the help of people, but what actually raised him up was the word of Jesus. The sick man rose not by his own strength but because Jesus raised him up.

In the same way, a sinner is not saved by his own deeds or religious efforts. He obtains the remission of sin and new life by hearing and believing the word of the salvation that Jesus accomplished.

5. Jesus revealed His saving power to the most helpless person

Thirty-eight years is a long enough time for a person to solve his problem by his own strength. But even after those long years had passed, the sick man was still lying in his place. Time did not heal his sickness, his own efforts did not raise him up, and the people around him did not save him either.

By raising up this very man, Jesus revealed the fact that what is impossible for man is possible for the Son of God.

The more hopeless the sick man's condition, the more clearly the power of Jesus is revealed. Even the man who had not been able to rise for thirty-eight years rose immediately when Jesus spoke. This event shows that however many one's sins may be and however deeply fallen the human condition may be, one can be saved from all sins by believing in the salvation that Jesus accomplished.

6. He gave the healed man a new life

"Afterward Jesus found him in the temple, and said to him, 'See, you have been made well. Sin no more, lest a worse thing come upon you.' The man departed and told the Jews that it was Jesus who had made him well" (John 5:14–15).

After healing the sick man, Jesus met him again in the temple. This shows that Jesus did not merely heal his body and leave, but cared for his soul and his life afterward as well.

The words *"See, you have been made well"* mean that he is to remember the grace Jesus has bestowed. The words *"Sin no more"* are a calling not to return to being a slave of sin after being healed, but to live a new life before God.

After raising the sick man from his place, Jesus also gave him a new way to walk. A saved person must not return to the life in which he formerly lay under sin, but must believe in Jesus, who saved him, and live according to the will of God.

7. By healing on the Sabbath He gave true rest

The day the man was healed of his sickness was the Sabbath. The Jews made an issue not of the fact that the man who had been sick for thirty-eight years was healed, but of the fact that he took up his bed and walked on the Sabbath.

They saw the form of the law, but they did not see the work of God, in which a person was delivered from long suffering and obtained new life.

That Jesus healed the sick man on the Sabbath reveals that God's work of bringing people to life from sin and death is the work of true rest. Rest is not simply stopping the work of the body; it is a person ceasing from the labor of trying to become righteous by his own efforts and entering into the perfect salvation that Jesus accomplished.

The man who had been sick for thirty-eight years had waited for long years to be healed of his sickness, but he had achieved nothing. But by the word of Jesus he rose immediately and obtained true rest and freedom.

Those who believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit also escape from the endless efforts to remove their own sins and obtain true rest within the salvation that Jesus completed.

8. He revealed that He is the One who gives life together with God the Father

“For this reason the Jews persecuted Jesus, and sought to kill Him, because He had done these things on the Sabbath. But Jesus answered them, ‘My Father has been working until now, and I have been working.’ Therefore the Jews sought all the more to kill Him, because He not only broke the Sabbath, but also said that God was His Father, making Himself equal with God” (John 5:16–18).

Jesus said, *“My Father has been working until now, and I have been working.”* It means that because God the Father does the work of giving life, Jesus, the Son of God, also does the same work.

The sign of raising up the man who had been sick for thirty-eight years revealed that Jesus is the Son of God, equal with God. Jesus is not merely a man who healed a sickness by borrowing power from God, but God, who gives life together with the Father.

God the Father revealed through His Son what kind of God He is.

- He is the God of mercy, who has pity on sinners.
- He is the God of love, who first goes to the helpless.
- He is the God of life, who raises up the dead and the sick.
- He is the God who gives true rest to those under sin and the law.
- He is the God who saves mankind from sin through His Son.

9. The salvation of the man who had been sick for thirty-eight years and the gospel of the water and the Spirit

The man who had been sick for thirty-eight years could not rise by his own strength, but he rose once and for all by the word of Jesus. This event shows the power of Jesus, who saves sinners once and for all with the gospel of the water and the Spirit.

All people are born with sin and cannot help sinning all their lives. The law exposes a person's sins, but it does not remove those sins. Like the man who had been sick for thirty-eight years, a sinner cannot rise from sin and judgment by his own strength.

That is why Jesus Christ, the Son of God, came to sinners.

— Jesus came to this earth in a human body.

— With the baptism He received from John, He took charge of all the sins of mankind on His own body.

— Bearing the sin of the world, He was hung on the Cross and received the judgment of sin in our place.

— Rising from the dead, He gave new life and eternal life to those who believe.

Just as Jesus said to the man who had been sick for thirty-eight years, "*Rise, take up your bed and walk,*" and raised him up, the gospel of the water and the Spirit raises up those lying under sin and makes them live as the sinless people of God.

A sinner is not saved by trying to heal himself, but by believing the word that Jesus removed all our sins with the baptism He received from John, the Cross, and the resurrection.

Conclusion

The reasons Jesus went to the man who had been sick for thirty-eight years, out of the many sick people, and saved him are as follows.

Reason	Meaning shown in the passage
To show the helplessness of human beings	The sick man could not get into the pool by his own strength
To reveal the mercy of God	It was not the sick man but Jesus who came to him first
To show that salvation does not lie in competition and merit	He was healed not by the method of getting into the water first but by the grace of Jesus
To reveal the power of the word	He rose immediately at the word “Rise and walk”
To give true rest	He saved him from sin and suffering on the Sabbath
To reveal the divinity of Jesus	As the Father works, the Son also gave life
To call the sinner to a new life	He spoke to the healed man of a new life apart from sin

The man who had been sick for thirty-eight years was a person who desperately needed a Savior because there was no possibility whatsoever in himself. Through this man, Jesus showed not a salvation achieved by human effort, but the

salvation that the Son of God, who first came to the sinner, accomplishes once and for all by His word.

Jesus, who raised up the man who had been sick for thirty-eight years, today also raises up those lying under sin through the gospel of the water and the Spirit, which He accomplished with the baptism He received from John, the blood of the Cross, and the resurrection. Those who believe this word of salvation with their hearts have all their sins remitted, escape from judgment, and come to live a new life as the children of God.

John 5:19–47, if we speak of it in terms of the divinity of Jesus and the word of the gospel of the water and the Spirit?

John 5:19–47 testifies that Jesus is not a mere prophet or religious leader, but God, equal with God the Father, and the Savior who has the authority to give life to sinners and to judge them. It also shows the fact that those who believe in the salvation that Jesus accomplished with the baptism He received from John, the blood of the Cross, and the resurrection obtain the remission of sin and eternal life.

1. Jesus is God, who works together with God the Father

Jesus was persecuted by the Jews for healing the man who had been sick for thirty-eight years on the Sabbath. At that time Jesus said that He works with the same will and authority as God the Father.

“Then Jesus answered and said to them, ‘Most assuredly, I

say to you, the Son can do nothing of Himself, but what He sees the Father do; for whatever He does, the Son also does in like manner.’” (John 5:19).

The words “*can do nothing of Himself*” do not mean that Jesus has no power. Because Jesus is completely one in will with God the Father, He does not do anything separated from the will of the Father. The words that the Son also does whatever the Father does in the same way reveal that the divinity and authority of the Father and the Son are one.

That Jesus raised up the man who had been sick for thirty-eight years was also the saving work of the Father revealed through the Son. God, who created man, raised up the sick man by His word. This sign shows that Jesus is God, who not only heals the sickness of the body but also makes the soul dead in sin live.

2. Jesus is the Lord of life, who raises the dead

“For as the Father raises the dead and gives life to them, even so the Son gives life to whom He will” (John 5:21).

Giving life is something only God can do. Yet Jesus said that He, too, raises the dead. This testifies that the life of God is in Jesus, and that Jesus is God, who makes both soul and body live.

Even though a sinner is alive in the body, he is in spiritual death, cut off from God because of sin. What makes a person live from this spiritual death is the gospel of the water and the Spirit.

Jesus came to this earth in the flesh and took charge of all the sins of the world once and for all through the baptism He received from John. Jesus had the sin of the world transferred to Him, bore that sin, and went on to the Cross. On the Cross He

shed His blood and received the judgment of sin, and by rising from the dead He accomplished perfect salvation.

Those who believe this word of salvation with their hearts have all their sins washed away and receive the Holy Spirit as a gift. The soul that was dead in sin comes alive, is united with God again, and becomes a child of God.

3. Jesus is the One who is to be honored equally with God the Father

“For the Father judges no one, but has committed all judgment to the Son, that all should honor the Son just as they honor the Father. He who does not honor the Son does not honor the Father who sent Him” (John 5:22–23).

God the Father has committed the authority to judge to the Son. Its purpose is that all people should honor the Son just as they honor the Father.

Believing in Jesus does not stop at acknowledging Him as a great man or a prophet. It is believing in Jesus as the Creator God, the Savior of mankind, the Lord of life, and the final Judge. Accepting the salvation that Jesus accomplished with the baptism He received from John, the blood of the Cross, and the resurrection is the faith that honors Jesus as God.

4. Those who hear the word of Jesus and believe have passed from death into life

“Most assuredly, I say to you, he who hears My word and believes in Him who sent Me has everlasting life, and shall not come into judgment, but has passed from death into life” (John 5:24).

The words “*hears My word*” here do not mean knowing only the name of Jesus and following Him religiously. They mean hearing through the word and believing who Jesus is and what God the Father sent Him to accomplish.

God the Father sent His only begotten Son to save sinners. Jesus, obeying the will of the Father, completed salvation as follows.

The ministry of Jesus	The meaning for salvation
Came to this earth in the flesh	God became a man to save sinners
The baptism He received from John	Took charge of all the sins of mankind on His own body once and for all
Shed His blood and died on the Cross	Received in our place the judgment and the wages of the sins He took charge of
Rose from the dead	Overcame sin and death and gave new life to those who believe
Sent the Holy Spirit	Seals those who have received the remission of sin as the children of God and dwells in them

Those who believe this gospel with their hearts have already passed from death into life. A person who was under the judgment of sin has received the remission of sin and obtained eternal life.

5. Those who hear the voice of the Son of God will live

“Most assuredly, I say to you, the hour is coming, and now is, when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God; and those who hear will live” (John 5:25).

“*The dead*” refers first to those who are spiritually dead because of sin. Those who hear and believe the voice of the Son of God, that is, the gospel of the water and the Spirit, receive the remission of sin and come alive spiritually.

The word of Jesus is not mere knowledge. It is the word that washes the sin in a sinner’s heart clean and gives new life. When a person believes the word that Jesus took charge of our sins with the baptism He received from John and received the judgment of those sins with the blood of the Cross, sin disappears from that person’s heart and the Holy Spirit comes upon him.

In the future, Jesus will resurrect all the dead bodily as well.

“Do not marvel at this; for the hour is coming in which all who are in the graves will hear His voice and come forth—those who have done good, to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil, to the resurrection of condemnation” (John 5:28–29).

Those who have received the remission of sin and new life by believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit take part in the resurrection of life. Those who reject that faith and remain in sin come forth to the resurrection of condemnation. The good deeds are the fruit in which the new life obtained by believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit is revealed through faith and obedience.

6. The judgment of Jesus is righteous because it is one with the will of God

“I can of Myself do nothing. As I hear, I judge; and My judgment is righteous, because I do not seek My own will but the will of the Father who sent Me” (John 5:30).

The judgment and verdict of Jesus are always righteous. It is because Jesus is completely one with the will of God the Father.

Jesus took charge of all our sins and Himself received the judgment of those sins. Therefore He can pronounce that those who believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit have no sin. Conversely, those who to the end do not accept the salvation that God completed through the Son remain under the judgment of their own sins.

Jesus the Savior and Jesus the Judge are the same One. Because Jesus paid the price of salvation completely, He perfectly saves those who believe, and He also righteously judges the sin of rejecting the salvation He accomplished.

7. The ministry of John the Baptist and the ministry of Jesus testify to the divinity of Jesus

Jesus spoke of several witnesses that testify of Him.

“You have sent to John, and he has borne witness to the truth” (John 5:33).

“But I have a greater witness than John’s; for the works which the Father has given Me to finish—the very works that I do—bear witness of Me, that the Father has sent Me” (John 5:36).

John the Baptist was sent from God and testified of Jesus. He carried out the ministry of administering baptism to Jesus so that

the sin of the world would pass on to Jesus, and then he testified of Jesus as “*the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world.*”

When Jesus was baptized by John, God the Father Himself testified that Jesus is His beloved Son, and the Holy Spirit descended upon Him like a dove. The words and signs of Jesus that followed, and the Cross and the resurrection, confirmed that Jesus is the Savior sent by God the Father.

The witnesses shown in the passage and at Jesus’ baptism can be summarized as follows.

Witness	What it testifies
The witness of John the Baptist	Jesus is the Lamb of God, who takes charge of the sin of the world
The witness of God the Father	Jesus is the beloved Son of God
The witness of the Holy Spirit	Jesus is the Christ, who accomplishes the will of God
The works Jesus did	Jesus is God, who gives life and saves sinners
The Scriptures and the writings of Moses	The law and the sacrifices of the Old Testament testify of the saving work of Jesus

8. The center of the Scriptures is Jesus and the salvation He accomplished

“You search the Scriptures, for in them you think you have eternal life; and these are they which testify of Me. But you are not willing to come to Me that you may have life” (John 5:39–40).

The Jews read the Scriptures diligently, but they did not accept Jesus, of whom the Scriptures testify. Knowing much of the Scriptures and believing with the heart in the Savior of whom the Scriptures testify are different things.

The law of the Old Testament exposes that people are sinners. In the sacrifices, the sinner laid his hands on the sacrificial offering and passed his sins on to it, and the sacrificial offering bore those sins and shed its blood and died. This law of sacrifice showed in advance that Jesus would have the sins of mankind passed on to Him with the baptism He received from John, and would shed His blood on the Cross and pay the wages of sin.

Therefore, to search the Scriptures rightly is to find in the Scriptures the gospel of the water and the Spirit that Jesus accomplished, and to believe it. Eternal life does not lie in knowledge of the Scriptures itself, but in believing in Jesus Christ, of whom the Scriptures testify, and in His work of salvation.

9. Those who seek the glory of men cannot believe in Jesus

“How can you believe, who receive honor from one another, and do not seek the honor that comes from the only God?” (John 5:44).

The Jewish leaders liked to be recognized and exalted by

people. This kind of heart kept them from admitting their sin and helplessness before Jesus.

The glory that comes from God is the glory of God sending His Son to save sinners and making those who have received the remission of sin His children. Those who believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit lay down their own righteousness and religious honor and rely only on the salvation that Jesus accomplished.

Those who believe in the salvation of God seek the glory of God that says, “Jesus has removed all my sins,” rather than the glory of men that says, “I have achieved something.”

10. The law and writings of Moses also testify of Jesus

“Do not think that I shall accuse you to the Father; there is one who accuses you—Moses, in whom you trust. For if you believed Moses, you would believe Me; for he wrote about Me. But if you do not believe his writings, how will you believe My words?” (John 5:45–47).

The law of Moses exposes people’s sins and accuses them as sinners. At the same time, the tabernacle and the sacrifices that Moses wrote about testify of the salvation of Jesus Christ, who was to come.

Just as the sacrificial offering had sins passed on to it through the laying on of hands, Jesus took charge of all the sins of the world once and for all with the baptism He received from John. Just as the sacrificial offering bore the sinner’s sins and shed its blood, Jesus bore the sin of the world and shed His blood on the Cross and received the judgment of sin. And by rising from the dead, He gave eternal life to those who believe.

Therefore, the faith that truly believes the writings of Moses

leads to the faith that believes in Jesus Christ and the gospel of the water and the Spirit, to which those writings point.

Conclusion

In John 5:19–47, Jesus is revealed as the following.

- God, equal with God the Father
- The Son of God, who works with the same will as the Father
- The Lord of life, who makes souls dead in sin live
- The Judge, who resurrects and judges all people
- The Lamb of God, who took charge of all the sins of the world with the baptism He received from John
- The Savior, who received the judgment of all sins in our place with the blood of the Cross
- The Lord, who rose from the dead and gives eternal life to those who believe
- The Christ, of whom all the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments testify

The divinity of Jesus and the gospel of the water and the Spirit are not separated from each other. Jesus, who is God, came as a man, took charge of all the sins of mankind once and for all with the baptism He received from John, paid the wages of sin with the blood of the Cross, and rose from the dead. Those who believe this word with their hearts have all their sins washed away, receive the Holy Spirit, and pass from death into life. This is the divinity of Jesus and the gospel of eternal life that John 5:19–47 testifies of. ☒

Questions and Answers on John Chapter 5

[Question] 1. State one distinct characteristic that runs through John chapter 5.

The outstanding characteristic of John chapter 5 is that Jesus Christ is shown intensively as God, equal with God the Father, and as the One who has the authority to give life to people and to judge them.

This chapter begins with the event of healing the man who had been sick for thirty-eight years at the pool of Bethesda. But because the day the sick man was healed was the Sabbath, the Jews persecuted Jesus. To this Jesus said, *“My Father has been working until now, and I have been working.”* The Jews understood this word as Jesus having *“said that God was His Father, making Himself equal with God,”* and sought all the more to kill Him.

Jesus made it clear that He does the same things the Father does. He said that as the Father raises the dead, the Son also gives life to people, and that because the Father has committed judgment to the Son, all people should honor the Son just as they honor the Father. Therefore Jesus is not merely a prophet who heals sickness, but God, who has the authority of life and judgment.

Jesus also declared that those who hear His word and believe in God, who sent Him, have obtained eternal life, do not come into judgment, and have passed from death into life. Because Jesus is equal with God, His word can make dead souls live and

give eternal life.

But the Jews, even while searching the Scriptures, did not come to Jesus, of whom the Scriptures testify. The testimony of John the Baptist, the works Jesus did, the testimony of God the Father, and the Scriptures and the writings of Moses all pointed to Jesus, but they did not receive Jesus.

Therefore John chapter 5 has the characteristic that, while the divinity and authority of Jesus, equal with God, are clearly revealed, the unbelief of the Jews, who rejected Jesus even after seeing such sufficient evidence, stands out in sharp contrast.

This one characteristic binds the whole chapter together. The event of the man who had been sick for thirty-eight years rising by the word of Jesus actually shows that the Son is the One who gives life, and the words that follow make clear that this authority of life and authority of judgment have been committed from God the Father to the Son. The several testimonies presented at the end call people to believe in that Jesus and obtain eternal life. Therefore the center of this chapter lies not in a mere healing of sickness, but in revealing who Jesus Christ, who did that work, is.

[Question] 2. In John chapter 5 verse 2, what kind of gate was the Sheep Gate, and where was it?

The Sheep Gate was one of the actual gates in the wall of Jerusalem. The name “*Sheep Gate*” literally means “the gate of the sheep.” The Gospel of John records that beside this gate there was a pool called Bethesda, having five porches.

“Now there is in Jerusalem by the Sheep Gate a pool, which is called in Hebrew, Bethesda, having five porches” (John 5:2).

The Sheep Gate also appears in the Old Testament. When the

wall of Jerusalem was rebuilt in the days of Nehemiah, Eliashib the high priest and the priests built the Sheep Gate, consecrated it, and hung its doors.

Nehemiah 3:1 says, *“Then Eliashib the high priest rose up with his brethren the priests and built the Sheep Gate; they consecrated it and hung its doors,”* and the last verse of the same chapter also records, *“Between the upper room at the corner, as far as the Sheep Gate, the goldsmiths and the merchants made repairs.”* These words show that the Sheep Gate was one of the entrances in the wall of Jerusalem, and that it was a gate mentioned as an important reference point when the wall was repaired.

In John 5:2, the Sheep Gate serves as a geographical marker that tells the location of the pool of Bethesda. The pool of Bethesda was near the temple of Jerusalem, and beside it were five porches where people could stay. Many sick people were gathered there, and Jesus went to the man among them who had been sick for thirty-eight years and healed him by His word.

Therefore the Sheep Gate is not a gate that exists only in symbol, but a gate that actually existed in the wall of Jerusalem. With this gate as the reference point, the Gospel of John makes clear where the pool of Bethesda was and where Jesus met the man who had been sick for thirty-eight years.

[Question] 3. In John chapter 5 verses 5–9, how did Jesus Christ show His love to the man who had been sick for thirty-eight years?

The love of Jesus Christ was shown first in His coming in person to the sick man, who could receive no help at all. There were many sick people by the pool of Bethesda, but Jesus saw

the man who had been lying sick for thirty-eight years. The Scriptures say, *“When Jesus saw him lying there, and knew that he already had been in that condition a long time.”* It was not that the sick man first went to Jesus, but that Jesus, knowing his long suffering and helpless situation, drew near to him.

Jesus also asked, *“Do you want to be made well?”* This was not a question asked because He did not know his circumstances. Jesus led the sick man to bring out the earnest desire he had been holding, and listened to his situation as he confessed, *“I have no man to put me into the pool.”* He did not turn away from the man whom no one helped, but gave ear to his lament.

Above all, the love of Jesus did not stop at sympathy, but was shown as the power that actually raised the sick man up. Jesus did not demand of him a way to get into the pool or an effort of his own, but said, *“Rise, take up your bed and walk.”* Then it says, *“Immediately the man was made well, took up his bed, and walked.”* The sick man, who had been able to do nothing for thirty-eight years, rose immediately and walked at a single word of Jesus.

In this scene the effort of man and the work of the Lord stand in clear contrast. The sick man knew the method of getting in first when the water was stirred, but he could not even move by his own strength, and there was no one to put him in. By the method he was holding on to, there was no way for him to be healed however long he waited. But when Jesus came in person and spoke, that word became the actual power by which the sick man could rise, take up his bed, and go.

Therefore the love of Christ shown in this event is a merciful love that first comes to the helpless person, hears his desire, and saves him completely with His own word and power. It is a love in which the Lord accomplishes everything, not human effort or merit.

Nor was this love a love that comforted the sick man's present situation only for a moment. Jesus later met him again in the temple and warned him about sin. That is, after healing his body, He did not leave him as he was, but cared for him so that the healed man would not return to the way of sin, but would live following the Lord, who made him live. The love that came to him first, the love that raised him up by the word, and the love that exhorted him about his life afterward were shown together.

[Question] 4. In John chapter 5 verse 14, how should we understand the words in which Jesus connected sickness with sin?

After healing the man who had been sick for thirty-eight years, Jesus met him again in the temple and said, *“See, you have been made well. Sin no more, lest a worse thing come upon you.”* Jesus did not merely heal his body and end there; He also told him what kind of faith he should live with after receiving grace.

This word shows that the bodily sickness that had afflicted the man for thirty-eight years came from sin. Jesus released him from the sickness by solving the problem of his sin. Here the words *“Sin no more”* do not mean to become a perfect person who never does wrong again. They are a warning not to return, after receiving the remission of sin, to the unbelief and false faith that try to receive the remission of sin again, but to believe in the Lord, who saved him, and to live according to His will.

The words *“lest a worse thing come upon you”* also cannot be limited simply to meaning not to fall into a greater bodily sickness. If a person who has been healed by Jesus abandons that grace and pursues only his own desires, he can become a slave of the devil again and fall into a more miserable life than before.

He must not think that, having been saved, he may now live regardless of the Lord's will. He must love and thank the Lord, who saved him, and live according to the will that pleases the Lord.

Even after being saved, a person's weakness and evil continue to be revealed. But one must neither be discouraged, looking only at one's own shortcomings, nor think that, having already been saved, one may live as one pleases. Rather, every time one's weakness is revealed, one must give thanks, saying, "He saved even someone like me," and rely on the Lord all the more.

By being baptized by John the Baptist, Jesus took upon Himself all the sins of mankind, including that man's sins. And bearing those sins, He was hung on the Cross and received the judgment, and rose from the dead and became the perfect Savior. Therefore one must not try to receive the remission of sin again every time sin is revealed. One must believe that all one's sins have already been completely settled by the baptism, the Cross, and the resurrection of Jesus, and reflect on the grace of that salvation.

Therefore the words "*Sin no more*" did not demand a perfect, sinless life. They are words telling a person who has received the remission of sin and salvation from Jesus not to return to the unbelief and false faith that cannot believe in that perfect salvation, nor to abandon the Lord and pursue only the desires of the flesh. They are a solemn warning to believe in Jesus, who saved him from sin and judgment, to give thanks, and to live according to His will.

[Question] 5. In John chapter 5 verse 16, what caused the official persecution of Christ by the Jews to begin?

The direct reason the Jews began to persecute Jesus Christ openly was that Jesus healed the man who had been sick for thirty-eight years on the Sabbath. Jesus not only healed the sick man but also commanded him, *“Rise, take up your bed and walk.”* The Jews made an issue not of the grace by which the sick man was healed, but of the fact that He healed the sickness on the Sabbath and made him take up his bed and go. When the healed man revealed that the One who had healed him was Jesus, it says, *“For this reason the Jews persecuted Jesus, and sought to kill Him, because He had done these things on the Sabbath.”*

But the reason the persecution grew even more severe, to the point of seeking to kill Jesus, appears in the next word. It was because Jesus said, *“My Father has been working until now, and I have been working.”* Jesus made clear that healing the man who had been sick for thirty-eight years was the work of life and salvation that God the Father does, and that He, too, does that work together with the Father.

The Jews took Jesus calling God *“My Father”* as a word making Himself equal with God. So the Scriptures explain the reason they sought all the more to kill Jesus as that *“He not only broke the Sabbath, but also said that God was His Father, making Himself equal with God.”*

Therefore the direct beginning of the persecution was the healing of the sick man on the Sabbath, and the fundamental reason the persecution intensified into an intent to kill was that Jesus revealed that He is the Son of God, equal with the Father, who works together with God the Father. Even while seeing the work of God that makes the sick live, the Jews did not recognize

Jesus as the Son of God, but rather judged Him as one who broke the Sabbath and blasphemed God, and persecuted Him.

This event also reveals their religious state. That a man who had been lying for thirty-eight years rose up was something to rejoice over and give thanks to God for, but they put the Sabbath regulations they were holding on to ahead of the One who gave life. Moreover, when Jesus made clear that the work was one He did together with the Father, they did not try to examine and believe that word, but tried to get rid of Jesus. Therefore this persecution was not a mere dispute over the interpretation of a regulation, but began from rejecting God, who gives life through the Son.

[Question] 6. In John chapter 5 verse 24, explain the eternal life that those who believe in Christ obtain and the judgment they come to escape.

Jesus said, *“He who hears My word and believes in Him who sent Me has everlasting life, and shall not come into judgment, but has passed from death into life.”* Here, to believe is not vaguely acknowledging that God exists, but accepting with the heart the fact that God the Father sent Jesus Christ as the Savior of sinners, and that Jesus accomplished salvation just as He said.

God the Father sent the Son as the eternal Priest. By being baptized by John the Baptist, Jesus took upon Himself all the sins of mankind, and bearing those sins, He was hung on the Cross and received the judgment of sin in our place, and He rose again three days after He died and completed salvation. To hear the word of Jesus is precisely to hear this word of the baptism, the Cross, and the resurrection, and to believe in the Father who sent Him is to accept as fact the salvation of God accomplished

through the Son.

The person who believes like this is not a person who may obtain eternal life in the future, but a person who already “has obtained eternal life.” Jesus did not say, “will have everlasting life,” but said, “*has everlasting life.*” Also, He did not say that one would someday be moved from death into life, but declared that one already “*has passed from death into life.*” A person who had been cut off from God by sin and was spiritually dead has heard the voice of the Son of God and come alive, and has actually obtained new life.

This eternal life does not simply mean that the body lives a long time. It is the life of receiving the life of God and being united with God, in which even if the body dies, the soul does not die, and in the future one takes part in the resurrection of life and lives forever in the kingdom of God. Therefore eternal life is not a vague hope that begins only after death, but a reality that has already begun in the one who believes and will be revealed completely in the future through the resurrection.

The judgment that those who believe come to be spared is the judgment of condemnation and eternal destruction that they had to receive because of their own sins. God passed the sins of mankind on to the Son and judged the Son, who bore those sins, on the Cross. Because Jesus received the judgment in our place, those who believe in that salvation are not judged again for the same sins. The ground for escaping judgment is not that a person has lived a good life or sinned little, but that Jesus took upon Himself all his sins and ended the judgment.

Therefore those who believe in Christ are people who have now received the remission of sin and have passed from death into life, and they are not people who will in the future receive the condemnation of sin and enter hell. Eternal life is real, and being spared from judgment is also real. This assurance comes

not from examining one's own feelings or deeds, but from hearing and believing the word of Jesus Christ, who completed salvation with the baptism, the Cross, and the resurrection.

[Question] 7. In John chapter 5 verses 28 and 29, when is it that all who are in the graves hear the voice of the Son of God?

Here “*all who are in the graves*” refers to all people who have died bodily. At the time of the last resurrection, they hear the voice of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, and come back to life. But not all people are resurrected on the same day and at the same hour for the same purpose.

The word spoken in verse 25, just before, “*the hour is coming, and now is, when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God; and those who hear will live,*” refers to those who are spiritually dead, cut off from God by sin, hearing the word of the gospel now and coming alive. On the other hand, verses 28 and 29 speak of “*all who are in the graves,*” so they refer to the resurrection of the body. Therefore we must distinguish between the spiritual life of hearing the word and coming alive now, and the bodily resurrection of coming forth from the grave in the future.

First, the saved saints come forth to the resurrection of life when the Lord comes again and the last trumpet sounds. This is the first resurrection. With changed bodies they meet the Lord and come to reign with Christ.

1 Corinthians 15:51 and 52 say, “*We shall all be changed—in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.*” When the Lord comes again, the

saints who have already died come alive with incorruptible bodies, and the living saints are also changed and meet the Lord. This is the resurrection of life.

After that, when the thousand years are finished, the rest of the dead come alive to be judged. This is the resurrection of condemnation. Therefore the words *“the hour is coming in which all who are in the graves will hear His voice”* mean that all who have died will surely be resurrected, but the time and the result differ from one another. The saved come forth to the resurrection of life at the second coming of the Lord, and those who are not saved come forth to the resurrection of condemnation after the thousand years.

Revelation chapter 20 says that those who take part in the first resurrection reign with Christ for a thousand years, and that *“the rest of the dead did not live again until the thousand years were finished.”* After that, the dead stand before the great throne and are judged. Therefore the voice of Christ opens every grave, but for those who believe it becomes the resurrection of life, in which they enjoy eternal life, and for those who have not believed it becomes a resurrection for receiving judgment.

“Do not marvel at this; for the hour is coming in which all who are in the graves will hear His voice and come forth—those who have done good, to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil, to the resurrection of condemnation” (John 5:28–29).

[Question] 8. In John chapter 5 verses 30–32, what is the true meaning of the words of Jesus Christ, “I can of Myself do nothing”?

These words do not mean that Jesus Christ has no power or

is inferior to God the Father. Earlier the Lord said that as the Father raises the dead, He, too, raises the dead, and that the Father has committed all judgment to the Son. Therefore these words reveal not a lack of power but that the will and work of the Father and the Son are completely one.

In verse 19, too, Jesus said, *“The Son can do nothing of Himself, but what He sees the Father do,”* and then immediately said, *“Whatever He does, the Son also does in like manner.”* If we take only the first sentence by itself, it seems to speak of inability, but when we see it together with the sentence that follows, the meaning is the exact opposite. The Son does not act according to His own will separated from the Father, but is the One who does exactly the same work of life and salvation that the Father does.

Jesus did not set up His own will apart from the will of the Father or work as He pleased. He spoke just as the Father sent and commanded Him, accomplished the work of salvation, and judged as He heard from the Father. What Jesus did was precisely what the Father did, and what the Father did was revealed through the Son. Therefore the words *“I can of Myself do nothing”* mean that He does nothing by an independent will separated from the Father.

These words also show the obedience of the Son. Jesus did not judge for His own honor or benefit, but spoke and worked to accomplish the will of the Father who sent Him. Because there is no discrepancy between the will of the Father and the will of the Son, the judgment the Son makes is not a judgment biased to one side or swayed by emotion, but a righteous judgment.

For this reason, the judgment of Jesus is a righteous judgment according to the will of the Father, not one that comes from His own feelings or arbitrary judgment. Also, Jesus did not exalt Himself and claim on His own to be the Savior; He said

that the Father who sent Him testified of Him. The work of salvation itself, which Jesus accomplished in obedience to the command of the Father, is also a testimony that He is the Savior sent by God.

“I can of Myself do nothing. As I hear, I judge; and My judgment is righteous, because I do not seek My own will but the will of the Father who sent Me” (John 5:30).

[Question] 9. Besides John the Baptist, by what does John chapter 5 verses 33–40 testify of Jesus Christ? Examine each witness.

The fact that Jesus Christ is the Son sent by God and the Savior of mankind was revealed through several witnesses.

The first is the testimony of John the Baptist. John the Baptist was sent by God, administered baptism to Jesus, and revealed Him to Israel. He testified of Jesus, *“Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!” (John 1:29)*, and declared, *“I have seen and testified that this is the Son of God” (John 1:34)*. That is, he testified that Jesus is the Lamb of God who would take upon Himself the sins of mankind and the Son of God. That is why Jesus called John the Baptist *“the burning and shining lamp.”*

But Jesus is not One whose authority is established only when there is the testimony of men. The Lord spoke of the testimony of John the Baptist so that the Jews might hear that testimony, believe in Jesus, and obtain salvation.

The second is the testimony of the works Jesus Himself accomplished. The work that God the Father entrusted to Jesus to accomplish—that is, the work of salvation itself, in which He came to this earth, was baptized, took upon Himself the sins of

mankind, died on the Cross, and rose again—testifies that Jesus is the Savior sent by God. This is a greater witness than the words of John the Baptist.

The third is the testimony of God the Father. God the Father sent Jesus to this earth, and when Jesus was baptized, He Himself testified, “*This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased*” (*Matthew 3:17*). That Jesus completed the work of salvation in obedience to the will of the Father also reveals the fact that the Father sent Him.

The fourth is the testimony of the Scriptures. The promises and prophecies of the Old Testament and the words concerning the sacrifices and the sacrificial offerings all point to Jesus Christ, who would come and save sinners. Therefore the purpose of searching the Scriptures lies not in obtaining knowledge itself, but in meeting Jesus Christ, of whom the Scriptures testify, believing in Him, and obtaining eternal life.

The Jews, even while searching the Scriptures to obtain eternal life from them, did not come to Jesus, of whom the Scriptures actually testify. Their problem was not that the testimony was insufficient, but that because the word of God did not abide in their hearts, they did not believe in the Son whom God sent. John the Baptist, the works Jesus accomplished, God the Father, and the Scriptures all alike testify that Jesus Christ is the Son of God and the Savior.

These several witnesses are not separate from one another. John the Baptist testified that Jesus is the Lamb of God who would take away the sin of the world, and the work of salvation that Jesus actually accomplished showed that this testimony was true. God the Father sent the Son and Himself testified of Him, and the Scriptures had long ago recorded the salvation that the Son would accomplish. Therefore the purpose of these witnesses is not merely to increase knowledge about Jesus, but to bring

people to come to Him and obtain the remission of sin and eternal life.

[Question] 10. In John chapter 5 verses 41–44, how did Jesus reveal in a single phrase the state of the Jews who did not receive Him?

Jesus defined them in a single phrase as those who do not have the love of God in them.

“But I know you, that you do not have the love of God in you” (John 5:42).

Though they said they believed in God, they did not receive Jesus Christ, who came in the name of God the Father. The reason was that they sought the glory of being recognized by people and praising one another more than the glory that comes from God. If they had truly loved God, they would have recognized and received the Savior whom God sent.

They said that they searched the Scriptures and honored Moses, but they did not accept Jesus, of whom those Scriptures and Moses testified. The glory God wants to give is the glory of receiving the remission of sin through the Son, becoming the children of God, and enjoying eternal life. But they wanted to be exalted and recognized among people more than that glory. Because what they hoped for was not the salvation of God but their own glory, they could not believe in Jesus, who came in the name of the Father.

Therefore their problem did not lie in a lack of knowledge of the Scriptures or of religious zeal. It was because there was no love of God in their hearts and they sought the glory of men that they could not believe in Jesus.

The word Jesus spoke, *“If another comes in his own name,*

him you will receive,” also reveals the same state. It means that while they reject the One who conveys the will and salvation of God, they can accept one who satisfies people’s desires and their craving for honor. Outwardly they had the form of believing in God, but the center of their hearts was directed not toward God but toward themselves and the glory of the world.

Therefore the phrase that most accurately defines them is “those who do not love God.” Whether or not one has the love of God is judged not by words or religious position, but is revealed through whether one receives the Son whom God sent and seeks the glory of salvation that comes from God. ☒

Sermon 1 by Paul C. Jong

Our sinful true self

< John 5:1-9 >

“After this there was a feast of the Jews, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem. Now there is in Jerusalem by the Sheep Gate a pool, which is called in Hebrew, Bethesda, having five porches. In these lay a great multitude of sick people, blind, lame, paralyzed, waiting for the moving of the water. For an angel went down at a certain time into the pool and stirred up the water; then whoever stepped in first, after the stirring of the water, was made well of whatever disease he had. Now a certain man was there who had an infirmity thirty-eight years. When Jesus saw him lying there, and knew that he already had been in that condition a long time, He said to him, ‘Do you want to be made well?’ The sick man answered Him, ‘Sir, I have no man to put me into the pool when the water is stirred up; but while I am coming, another steps down before me.’ Jesus said to him, ‘Rise, take up your bed and walk.’ And immediately the man was made well, took up his bed, and walked. And that day was the Sabbath.”

The man who had been sick for thirty-eight years by the pool of Bethesda

Today we have read John chapter 5. From John 5:1 on, the man who had been sick for thirty-eight years appears here as the main figure. Our Lord went to this sick man, and seeing him lying there and knowing that he had already been in that

condition a long time, He said, *“Do you want to be made well?”* and the sick man answered, *“Sir, I have no man to put me into the pool when the water is stirred up; but while I am coming, another steps down before me.”* When Jesus said, *“Rise, take up your bed and walk,”* the man was immediately made well, took up his bed, and walked. The Scriptures record the event in which the man who had been sick for thirty-eight years was healed by the grace of Jesus Christ and took up his bed and walked. Our Lord had pity on this sick man, who had struggled and struggled with his sickness for as long as thirty-eight years and yet had not been healed and lay collapsed, and He came to him and saved him.

What can a person do for his own sickness? Can there be any power in a person to heal his own sick body? If this man who had been sick for thirty-eight years had thought that he could do something by himself, would not that very thought have been evil and wrong? If a person thinks that he can do something by himself to solve the sickness of sin that his soul suffers from, that person ends up despising Jesus Christ, who came to save us.

The Lord, who came to the person who had given up on himself

By the pool of Bethesda there were many sick people. But this man who had been sick for thirty-eight years was one who had struggled, given up on himself, and was lying there waiting only for the help of the Lord. The man who had been sick for thirty-eight years was a person who had given up on himself. The many other sick people were those who waited only for the water of the pool to be stirred, thinking that they could do something. But those people ended up being pushed out of the

Lord's attention.

To what kind of person does our Lord come? What kind of person comes to receive the remission of sin before the Lord? Our Lord went to the one who had given up his own efforts and was earnestly seeking the help of the Messiah. If this man who had been sick for thirty-eight years had thought that he could do something, and, sick though he was, had half risen and struggled and struggled, our Lord might perhaps have gone not to this man but to someone else.

We must know this man who had been sick for thirty-eight years in detail. We must observe him closely, because we ourselves are precisely this sick man. There were many sick people by the pool of Bethesda, but Jesus Christ knew that this man had already been sick for a long time, and said, "*Do you want to be made well?*" showing interest in him alone.

Yet among those who have received the remission of sin, there are also many who were not the man sick for thirty-eight years but were in the state of the blind, the lame, or the paralyzed who are mentioned before him in the passage, and received the remission of sin by the grace of God. There are many saints who were at first blind, lame, or paralyzed—mere skin and bones—and then, by the grace of God, were born again of water and the Spirit through the faith of those who have gone ahead and the word of truth. Among such saints, I very often see people who, after receiving the remission of sin, live their life of faith not knowing their own true self well, thinking, like a blind man who has just opened his eyes, "I am now a person whose problem is solved. I can now do something. I have found a new light and am a person who can do something." A person who does not know his own true self well—after opening his eyes like a blind man, how elated he is as he swaggers, shouts, and boasts! But after a little while, though his eyes were indeed opened, all that

shouting and excited boasting of the beginning is gone somewhere, and we will find him sitting by the roadside, drained of strength.

All of us are the man who had been sick for thirty-eight years

The passage speaks by contrasting the man who had been sick for thirty-eight years with the other sick people, and the point is that our Lord came only to this man who had been sick for thirty-eight years. We must rightly know the fact that when our Lord saved us, too, He did not save us when we were in the state of the blind, the lame, or the paralyzed, but saved us when we were completely in the same condition as the man who had been sick for thirty-eight years.

In the daytime I told you to abandon human thoughts, and not to serve human thoughts but to serve God with the heart; the word is that all of us, whether we have received the remission of sin or not, are the man who had been sick for thirty-eight years. This is not something said about some particular person, but about each one of us, that is, about ourselves.

We may think that we can do something before God, but even after receiving the remission of sin, human thoughts are of no use at all, and human wisdom is of no use at all either. Our Lord works on us until we realize that, though we thought we could do something, in fact we could do nothing. Dear fellow believers, I want you to take a look at yourselves. I want you to examine whether, having been blind and merely opened your eyes, you are really a person who can do something after opening your eyes, or not. Though we have received the remission of sin, is there anything right in us before God? Are

our thoughts right, are our hearts right, are our actions right? We must think about that point.

When we look closely into our thoughts and hearts, we discover the thoughts of each of us, which are utterly useless and unfit before God, just as the man who had been sick for thirty-eight years could do nothing by himself. We come to know the fact that we human beings have not a single ability to do anything for God by ourselves. I want you to take a look at what there is in you that is fit to be used for God. When you look back on your own thoughts and heart, is there really anything at all that is fit for use? If you look, you will come to know that there is nothing you can do before God. Good thoughts or a good heart for God—not just as a manner of speaking, but really—there is not a single one.

When we look back on the thoughts that come up in us all day long, is there anything really useful? We may say, “Still, I do have some good thoughts, some right thoughts before God.” Of course, there are some at times. But those are thoughts we have when we are steeped in the grace of God; if you examine whether there is even one useful thing among the thoughts that rise up from human flesh, you will come to know that there is not one.

Truly, we have received the remission of sin through the grace and lovingkindness of God, and we have no sin because God has removed our sins. And after God removed our sins, He takes us and uses us, so we are merely being used. We cannot say that there is anything of our own. That God takes us and uses us after we have received the remission of sin—for this one thing alone we ought to give thanks.

Human beings have nothing to offer

Dear fellow believers, is it not so? Our thoughts are of no use at all. We human beings ourselves are of no use at all before the Lord. If just the Lord is taken away from us, our life is exactly the same as that of the man who had been sick for thirty-eight years. Whether born again or not born again, if just Jesus Christ is taken away from us, we are the same person as the man who had been sick for thirty-eight years. You will discover your own self, in which there is nothing you can do by yourself, nothing good, and no ability, and which is as useless before God as scrap.

After being born again, there are often people who have thoughts like this: “Still, I do something for the Lord; I am somewhat better than some people, I serve the Lord somewhat, there are things I labor at for the Lord, and I seem to be living really rightly.” One may also think, “Since receiving the remission of sin, I seem to be living somewhat for the Lord. I must be a person who is somewhat needed in the kingdom of God, too.” But when you look at it quietly, as time passes you will come to know that it is not that we serve the Lord, but that the Lord placed us, useless as we are, in the grace of God, saved us, and then uses us in right work, and that it is not because we are useful that God uses us.

“Truly, I thank You that God has bestowed grace on this useless body and uses me in this precious work. You came to remove my sin, and then You let me take part in this right work and enabled me to do this work—I truly thank You. This is truly grace. The very fact that I can do this work is grace.” We come to know that grace.

Human beings have nothing fit for use in doing the work of God. You may say it is too negative to say unconditionally that there is nothing, but is our character fit to be used before God?

Some people are so meek that when the Lord tells them to cry out, they cannot even cry out and so are not used, and some people raise their voices when told to be quiet and so are useless. What I am saying is that no human being has a character that is entirely fit for use before the Lord. As for thoughts, it would be good if we thought only useful thoughts, but we think a great many useless thoughts. When we look at people, there is not much that is useful. No, it is not that there is not much—there is none at all. Dear fellow believers, do you feel that it is so?

If one truly feels this, if one truly knows one's own true self, that person, being so thankful and grateful, will surely live as a person who serves the Lord. He has no complaint. He comes to say, "I truly thank You that God has redeemed a useless one like me and uses me like this in the work of God. I truly thank You that You use me, whether in this form or in that form."

It is truly a matter for thanks that God places us in the church, lets us hear the word of life, lets us praise God, lets us preach the gospel, lets us be used in the work of God, and lets us serve God. There is no reason to get angry before God just because we have to do something. It is only a matter for great thanks that, after saving us, He uses this useless human being in the good work of God.

Is there anything righteous in you? Are there righteous thoughts? Are there a righteous heart and righteous actions? If there are, they are there because God has given them to us. If we were all just sent out into the world, we are people who would each do a thing or two. Though one may look like a gentle person, when the hardness of heart rises up, one changes into the exact opposite, an evil figure. We are useless human beings. At best we eat and drink; at best we run for high office; at best we use trickery and scheming to try to rise higher and to oppress and hold others down; at best we are a life lived for this one little

sack, this one belly, in order to eat three good meals a day. What do people live for? They live in order to eat and live. Then why do they eat? They eat in order to live. They live for this sack. What do people do these days? As soon as they get up, it is exercise to lose weight. All their life long, all they do is eat and worry about getting fat and getting thin, managing the sack, and in the end, having managed it badly, they grieve as the sack rots—that is life. If we do not serve the work of God, if God does not entrust that work to us, there is nothing at all useful in us.

In preaching this way, by which God has given me the remission of sin and let me serve the Lord, I can even shout. If you tell me to speak of the fact that Jesus Christ took our sins away, that Jesus Christ came once and for all and cleanly healed the sins of all people, who can do nothing, like the man who had been sick for thirty-eight years, I can speak of it boldly. But when I look at whether I am a human being who is useful before God, and whether it is because there is something in me that is good in God's sight that I serve, I discover that there is not a single thing in me that is material fit for living for God. If I were told to offer something to God by myself and thereby become a useful person, I think that if I offered what I have, it would rather be a hindrance to the Lord's work and would only spoil the Lord's work, and could not help it at all. When I know myself and look at myself before God, I discover that I am the man sick for thirty-eight years, who has nothing to offer before God and can do nothing. That is how I am. And I believe that if you, too, were told to offer something humanly useful before God, you would have nothing.

Some people may think they are useful. "Still, I am useful in this field. In this field of art, who else is there in the church besides me? In this field of music, who else is there?" Dear fellow believers, there is nothing but being used because Jesus

Christ uses us. We can only truly thank the Lord that He uses lives that are of no use at all.

At times I set aside what I am doing and reflect on myself once before God. When I look at myself exactly as I am, I discover that there is nothing but what I have received before God, and that I have done nothing for God. I believe that you, too, have nothing but what God has done for you, helped you with, and led and blessed you with until now, and that you have done nothing for the Lord.

The grace of the Lord, who uses us, useless as we are

When we look quietly, the remission of sin, too, is our Lord removing sin from us, who are like the man who had been sick for thirty-eight years. He did not only remove sin; He said to the man who had been sick for thirty-eight years, “*Rise, take up your bed and walk,*” and gave him even the strength to walk. He did not only heal the sickness; He gave strength and made him walk, made him serve the Lord, placed him in the church, placed him among the members, that is, among the servants and people of God, so that he could live hearing only the word of God, eating pure fodder, and doing righteousness within the word—all this, too, God gave as a gift. He also gave gifts, gave positions, and gave the ability to work so that we could be used in the church. He gives the Holy Spirit to our hearts and lets us receive the inspiration and leading of the Holy Spirit. We human beings have nothing to offer before God. It is only that God one-sidedly removed our sins, and one-sidedly gave us the opportunity, the gifts, and the blessing to serve the Lord, and because we received them, we are now serving God.

If we are now living for God, it is because God has blessed us and given us the opportunity to testify of Jesus Christ, granted us the church, given us brothers and sisters, attached souls to us, given us the word, and leads us and makes us pray by the Holy Spirit in our hearts. It is achieved and lived out by receiving grace before God. This is life lived in grace; it is not that we are being used because we are useful for something. There is nothing in our human flesh that God could gladly accept. I am of no use at all and a completely corrupt human being, and I myself am a useless and cumbersome being in God's sight; yet God has made such a one as I receive the remission of sin, given me grace, given me the church, and let me serve the Lord, serve souls, and serve the saints within the church—if this is not the grace of God, what is it? All of this is truly the grace of God.

If there is a brother or sister who thinks, after receiving the remission of sin, that he is better than others or that he has something precious in him to offer before God, let him think about it. If God does not use you, how can you be used? If there is no church of God, how can you be used; if God does not attach souls to you, how can you preach the gospel; and if God does not place you in this position but casts you out into the world, how can you serve the Lord?

“Is it not because I have a faithful heart and faithful actions that others cannot imitate, that God takes me and uses me?” Dear fellow believers, that is absolutely not so. It is not because we are faithful that He takes us and uses us, nor because we have a sincere and precious heart that He takes us and uses us; God takes us and uses us because He says, “In order to give you some blessing, in order to make you blessed, I will use you.” It is not because there is something in us that He takes us and uses us.

In this world, and even in our born-again church, there are very many people smarter and more capable than I, people who,

if God took them and used them, would be more obedient and more faithful than I. If God had chosen and used other brothers and sisters in the church instead of us, there are really many who would do better, more faithfully, more diligently, and more surely than we do. Yet do you know what a great grace it is that God gives us an office in the church, gives us gifts, entrusts work to us according to those gifts, and uses you and me?

This is precisely the grace in which the man who had been sick for thirty-eight years met the Lord: *“Do you want to be made well?”* “Yes, I want to be made well, but I have no man to put me into the pool,” *“Rise, take up your bed and walk.”* The man who had been sick for thirty-eight years received the grace of the Lord and walked. He did the work of proclaiming the Lord. He did the work of praising the Lord and testifying of the Lord. Is this not the life of us ministers? Is it not the grace that God has bestowed on us, of no use at all, whom He called and placed in the church—on the ministers and on all the workers in the church, on us who are serving the Lord in various positions?

It is not because we are superior that God takes us and uses us. It is not because we are more outstanding than others, but in order to clothe us with grace and clothe us with blessing that He takes us and uses us, and we must know and give thanks for the fact that it is because He has clothed us with that blessing that we have now received the office of being able to serve the Lord. Giving thanks, we must not show ourselves off, but humbly, if there is work He tells us to do, say yes and do that work with thanksgiving.

In the church, offices are entrusted to the workers of God, but some people think very little of that office. “Is this what they entrusted to me and call an office? They should entrust something bigger; to entrust me with this thing the size of a grain of millet—it seems they do not know me at all. If they entrusted

me with something bigger than this, I would do it well.” Dear fellow believers, the very fact that that office was entrusted to a human being of no use at all is something to be thankful and overwhelmed about; if it is given, one should receive it as given and do it with thanksgiving, so what is there to complain about? If one really knows that one is a human being of no use at all, one ought to give thanks for this one fact alone, that He has placed one in the church. That after we received the remission of sin He gave us the church, placed us in the church, and entrusted work to us is truly something to give thanks for.

If we had not received the remission of sin and were not living in the church but were out in the world, what would we be doing? It is a predictable life. Is it not life to be one of those same old lives, just polishing this one sack prettily, stretching it and shrinking it, and then dying? If we are not used before God, we are of no use. If only we know that He has placed a human being of no use at all in the church, then for the one fact alone that He has entrusted work to us, we come to say, “*What shall I render to the LORD For all His benefits toward me?*” (*Psalm 116:12*). That He has granted our lives this opportunity to praise God, hear the word, preach the word, have fellowship with the brothers, and serve God within this church—apart from having received the remission of sin, where is there a greater grace than this?

No one was saved for being superior

Yet there are people who cannot give thanks and think like this: “I ought to go up, but I cannot even go up, and it is a real worry. What am I lacking compared with that person, that they left me out and raised only that person? A leader ought to know

how to see people; if they had entrusted this work to me, I would have done it splendidly.” It is because such a person still does not know himself. He only says with his lips, “I am a lacking person.” It is because he does not know himself well. What is superior about us, what is superior about us compared with others, that our Lord saved us? It was said that He saved one from a clan, one from a thousand, one from ten thousand, and it is really one in ten thousand, one in a thousand that He saved.

Among the billions of people living on this earth, if we pick out those who have received the remission of sin, it does not even come to one in ten thousand. Even looking at a single family, it is not that there were only people inferior to the one who received the remission of sin in that family, and so he was chosen. What I am saying is that we were not chosen because we are more outstanding than others. Looking quietly at my own family, too, only a few have received the remission of sin. It is not because we are somewhat useful that we receive the remission of sin and are used. Anyone who has received the remission of sin, if set in place, is used. If the Lord takes hold of him, speaks, and works, anyone is used. Is there anyone special among us? What happens if there is one like Saul? God deposes him.

We must fear and tremble lest we should become a Saul. When we come to know it, we are human beings of no use at all, not outstanding human beings but very ordinary people, the same human beings with the same nature, doing the same actions and thinking the same thoughts. Among the same human beings, God called us to use us and seated us in this position and in that position, and so we are now being used. Therefore all the office-holders in the church, and those who have not been given an office, too, ought to give thanks for merely coming to this church. How thankful it is that we can hear the word; the ears that can

hear this sound are blessed ears. Dear beloved saints, I am truly thankful.

Only the person who can do nothing by himself receives the remission of sin

This name Bethesda, which appears in John chapter 5, means ‘the house of mercy.’ It is a pool that bestows mercy. It says, *“having five porches. In these lay a great multitude of sick people, blind, lame, paralyzed, waiting for the moving of the water. For an angel went down at a certain time into the pool and stirred up the water; then whoever stepped in first, after the stirring of the water, was made well of whatever disease he had”* (John 5:2–4). In the Scriptures, the number five speaks of grace. God bestows mercy at this pool of mercy, but what kind of person is it that can receive that mercy? The word is that the person who can do nothing receives mercy. It is the person who can do nothing by himself for his own sickness.

The person who knows that he himself is really of no use at all, that he has sin, and that though he has tried every means and method to remove this sin, he cannot remove sin by himself and has no way to remove it, and who looks only to the mercy and lovingkindness of God. The person who puts his hope only in God with a poor heart, saying, “May God have pity on me, may the Almighty look down on me and touch me, heal my sickness, and clothe me with grace; only if You accomplish the remission of sin will I receive the remission of sin”—such a person receives the mercy of God. He receives pity and receives the remission of sin.

Only the person who can do nothing by himself receives the remission of sin; for the person who thinks he can do something

by himself, receiving the remission of sin is not hard—it is impossible. The Scriptures say that he has been excluded from those who are the object of Jesus’ attention. We, too, inherited sin from Adam and Eve and live committing many sins on this earth until we die, but if we had had even a little ability to remove sin, Jesus Christ would not have come to us, nor would He have removed our sins. As for the sins of the person who expects even a little that he can humanly solve the sins he commits, the person who thinks he has the ability, it is not that Jesus Christ did not take them away—He did take them away—but that person is excluded from those who are the object of His attention. God did not come for the person who says he can do it by himself.

To the person who can do nothing, who looks 100% only to the help of God, saying, “I am committing sin every day, but I cannot solve this sin by my own strength in any way. Lord, I have given up. If You save me, I am saved, and if You do not save me, I go to hell. God, please save me”—to that person our Lord came and settled his sin. *“I did not come to call the righteous, but sinners” (Matthew 9:13)*. It says that it was the will of God to call sinners and make them righteous.

If we had been even a little bit admirable humanly, and had had even 0.1% of something right to offer before God, Jesus Christ would not have come to this earth and removed our sins. Seeing that He removed our sins, it is because we are human beings who, left as we are, can only go to hell 100%, that He had pity on us. The Lord saved you and me, who have no righteousness at all, like this man who had been sick for thirty-eight years. He saved the person who can do nothing, the person who has nothing right. The sick people who appear in the passage are the blind, the lame, the paralyzed, and the man who had been sick for thirty-eight years, and of these only one

remained and all the rest were excluded. It is speaking of the fact that the person who thinks he has even a little something in himself is excluded from the grace of God.

We were saved 100% by the grace of God

It was said that at the pool of Bethesda whoever stepped in first when the water was stirred was healed of whatever disease he had. Is there such a pool in this world? The point is that such a legend existed among the people of Israel. This legend came to be because in the Old Testament age angels sometimes appeared in person and spoke. The Scriptures often speak of angels as the workers of God. Then where did the people who were excluded, apart from the man who had been sick for thirty-eight years, put their hope? They had tied 100% of their hope to the stirring of the water of the pool. That is, they put their hope in an angel, that is, in a worker. They put their hope in a person with power.

In this age, too, there are many revival preachers who boast of power. There are people who make a great noise, shouting, "Receive the fire!" Many people who hope for a faith of miracles pin their expectations on a person and, thinking that if that person lays hands on them once their sickness will be healed, they flock before him and make a commotion. Especially in this age there seem to be even more of them. Can our sins be remitted by some doctrine, some denomination, or a person's prayer or effort? They cannot. Yet there are many who, playing the role of the angel who stirs the water, say that if one repents one receives the Holy Spirit and the remission of sin, that one receives the remission of sin without being born again. They are people who boast of a power that stirs things up, saying that when they lay

hands on you a hot fire comes upon you.

Those who were excluded from the grace of Jesus Christ were excluded because they had their attention on the pool of mercy, that is, on a creature. Our hope must be placed in God; our receiving the remission of sin is something we receive before God; and the only One who removes our sins is Jesus Christ, the Almighty.

Jesus Christ has removed our sins. Sins red like scarlet, sins as many as the mist and the clouds—Jesus Christ has removed them. The Son of God, the Savior, came to this earth and Himself came to us and removed our sins; it was not by some denomination, or a person's power, or eloquence, or the power of divine healing, or fluent prayer, or good deeds that we received the remission of sin. Our remission of sin was not received through some person. Two thousand years ago our Lord came to this earth and, when He said, "*Do you want to be made well?*" and we said, "I am lacking. I am a sinner who can do nothing. I am a person who deserves to go to hell," He said to us, "*Rise, take up your bed and walk.*" The Lord had pity on us, Himself took charge of all our sins, and bore all the countless sins we commit on this earth, and so He delivered us from sin and let us receive salvation.

Was it because there was righteousness in us that the Lord regarded us as better and saved us? We were saved 100% by the grace of God. We have no sin because Jesus Christ has removed sin. To remove so perfectly the sins of people with so many shortcomings—God, Your power is truly great. What is it that the Scriptures say? It is that in ourselves there is no righteousness, nothing good, and nothing right before God, and that Jesus Christ had pity on such people, saved them, removed their sins, and clothed them with mercy. That is why we have received the remission of sin. We praise our Lord, for Jesus

Christ not only removed our sins but also said, “*Arise and walk*” (*Matthew 9:5*), and gave us the gifts and the ability to carry out the Lord’s will and to serve Him. We praise the Lord for giving us the grace of being able to serve the Lord throughout the life we live.

Dear beloved saints, those who cannot receive the remission of sin, those excluded from the grace of God, are people who still consider that they have many good parts in themselves. They are people who are still straining. Life is deceiving and being deceived. Pleased at having bought cheaply, at the market, a dried squid that had been puffed up big, I came out and felt it, and it had been pressed in a noodle press and stretched flat as a sheet of paper. I, who was pleased at buying it cheaply, was deceived, and the seller, one step ahead, deceived me. The world is deceiving and being deceived.

Those excluded from the grace of God are people who think they can do something, that it will work if they try. There are very many strong-willed people. The self-made man, the person from a Christian family with faith from the womb, the person who says he met God through sickness, the servant of power, the person who has looked after many orphans through good works, the person who has devoted himself to the Lord, the person who never married for the Lord’s sake, the person who, while building ten chapels, ran out of money and starved to death during fasting prayer—all the people listed so far, as long as they rely on those deeds, are people excluded from the grace of God in receiving the remission of sin.

The salvation received when one has given up completely

The five porches by the pool of Bethesda were full of sick people, who were waiting only for the water to be stirred. Yet Jesus Christ went only to the man who had been sick for thirty-eight years and healed only his sickness. All the rest were excluded. Jesus Christ healed this sick man because he could do nothing, and the rest were excluded because they still considered that they could do it themselves. In the Lord's sight, even if He helped them, they were not people who would rise and walk by faith.

The time when we are saved is when we have given up completely. It is when, worn out and worn out because of sin, we have given up completely in our hearts, saying, "I cannot live like this any longer. There is no way to escape from this wretched sin." As soon as Jesus asked this sick man, "*Do you want to be made well?*" the sick man said, "I have no man to put me into the pool," and this was because, having given up completely, the words in his heart came right out. When we received the remission of sin, too, were we not in a state of having given up completely?

To the person who received the remission of sin because he was completely worn out by sin, God allows things that wear him out again even after he has received the remission of sin. So raise both hands and surrender early. One should follow, saying, "Lord, You have saved me. I praise You"; if one follows, thinking, "Even though the Lord saved me, still He must have saved me because I am somewhat better than that person," the Lord disciplines and deals with him until in the end he comes to say, "Lord, You are right. There was nothing right in me. There is nothing but that You saved me and so I was saved. Hallelujah,

I praise You.” Brothers and sisters can greet one another, saying, “I praise the Lord, who saved a person like you.”

Those excluded from the grace of the Lord are all people who say they can do something. Looking at the present age, though this gospel is so exact, there are so very many phony smart people. Inside there is nothing smart at all, but only the outside is glossy. If you ask, “Do you believe in Jesus? Are you born again?” they say, “Jesus appeared in a dream and said He loves me,” and if you ask one word, they answer with ten. It is said that there are more than ten million Christians in our country. But the number of those who have received the remission of sin is extremely small. Jesus still goes to them even now, but they refuse Jesus. “Look at the family I come from—a Christian family; I graduated from theology school; I was trained in a mission organization; I have labored for the Lord.” They are all people who can each hold their own, so when Jesus tries to help them, they rather clench their fists and rush at Him to fight. Such people were all excluded, and it is the person who, like the man who had been sick for thirty-eight years, can do nothing at all and says, “God, can You save even such a one as I? When my hard and wicked temper comes out once, I cannot control it,” who receives salvation.

It is not only men who are hard-hearted. Even if they are prettily adorned on the outside, when the hardness of heart inside women comes out, it is just as frightening. People are all the same. Our Lord saved us, who could do nothing and who really could only go to hell. Dear fellow believers, do you believe?

Is there anything superior in us? There is not. There is really nothing superior. The man who had been sick for thirty-eight years was by the pool of Bethesda, and the Lord came to him, and so he received the remission of sin—this is completely free. If one says one was saved because there was something superior

in oneself, one would have a great deal to boast loudly about after receiving the remission of sin. "The Lord saved me because I am more outstanding than that person." That is precisely a Pharisee. If you go to a theological seminary, there are people who look exactly like the Pharisees who appear in the Bible of old. They put oil on their hair and walk in a holy manner, and if you ask them to say grace at a meal, before the food that has been set out they pray for forty minutes, starting from this country and this nation and going around the whole world. Whoever stops that prayer is rebuked as ungodly. I want you to know how many hypocritical and pretentious people there are in this world. So a strong-willed person, with one slip, goes to hell. It is the person of weak will, the person who knows himself well, who can receive the remission of sin.

Among the people I know there is a woman evangelist who, until she was past sixty, kept saying she would serve the Lord as a single woman, and then married after her sixtieth birthday. In the old days I thought that serving the Lord without marrying was a matter of receiving a great reward before God. But, dear fellow believers, being single in itself does not become a reward before God. Rather, bearing children and preaching the gospel to them and so making one more of the people of God is the precious work. To try to go to Heaven holily all by oneself is nothing more than one's own righteousness.

Boast only of the Lord

Dear beloved saints, we have nothing at all to boast of, and we were saved because the Lord saved us, who are like the man who had been sick for thirty-eight years. That we are the man who had been sick for thirty-eight years means that we are lives

filled only with evil thoughts, that is, with sins such as fornication, theft, murder, adultery, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lewdness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, and foolishness. The fact is that our Lord came to such people as we are and saved us. There is no one who does not fall under this. Even the person who merely has evil thoughts more than deserves to go to hell. Just as the man who had been sick for thirty-eight years could do nothing, when we lay our sins bare before God and look at them, we are people who have no righteousness at all and can only go to hell. I want you to give thanks that our Lord has saved such people. I want you to praise Him.

Dear fellow believers, I want you not to boast. If there is anything to boast of, I want you to boast that our Lord has saved you. If there is anything to boast of, I want you to boast of our Lord, who lets good works be served through us. I want you to boast of and praise our Lord, who has entrusted precious work to us. I want you to praise and serve the Lord humbly before the word of God, before the servants of God, and before this church, each in the position of the office entrusted to you.

Dear fellow believers, I want you not to be stiff-necked. I want you not to snort in pride. There is an old saying that a stubborn donkey is handled even by breaking its neck. Do not snort, but surrender early and humbly, saying, "God, I praise You, who saved me," and praise and serve the Lord within that grace. If you stubbornly hold out needlessly and only after being disciplined to your fill this way and that say, "Lord, I am a human being of no use at all. I praise You," by then others have already gone far ahead. It is a blessing not to boast of oneself but to be used in the precious work of the Lord. Our Lord, we praise You. I will close the message here. ✉

Sermon 2 by Paul C. Jong

The sick people by the pool of Bethesda

< John 5:1-9 >

“After this there was a feast of the Jews, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem. Now there is in Jerusalem by the Sheep Gate a pool, which is called in Hebrew, Bethesda, having five porches. In these lay a great multitude of sick people, blind, lame, paralyzed, waiting for the moving of the water. For an angel went down at a certain time into the pool and stirred up the water; then whoever stepped in first, after the stirring of the water, was made well of whatever disease he had. Now a certain man was there who had an infirmity thirty-eight years. When Jesus saw him lying there, and knew that he already had been in that condition a long time, He said to him, ‘Do you want to be made well?’ The sick man answered Him, ‘Sir, I have no man to put me into the pool when the water is stirred up; but while I am coming, another steps down before me.’ Jesus said to him, ‘Rise, take up your bed and walk.’ And immediately the man was made well, took up his bed, and walked. And that day was the Sabbath.”

Today we have read this passage of John chapter 5. This afternoon I intend to preach the gospel. The gospel is precious. Just as air is truly precious, yet because it is so common people do not well know how precious air is, so this gospel is truly precious, yet people do not really feel how precious the gospel

is. It is because it is so precious. But just as a person dies if he does not breathe the air, so if people do not believe in this gospel, they perish. That is why the righteous of this earth must preach the gospel. There are also some who have come new today; I welcome you. It is being fulfilled according to the promise of that word which says, *“Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved, you and your household” (Acts 16:31).*

In the text it says, *“There was a feast of the Jews, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem” (John 5:1).* We must first know the meanings of the words that appear in the Bible. Jerusalem means ‘the city of peace.’ In other words, it is the city of religion. By the Sheep Gate in Jerusalem there is a pool which is called in Hebrew Bethesda, and the meaning of the name Bethesda (בֵּיתֶתְשָׁדַי) is ‘the house of mercy.’ By that pool there were small houses where people could stay and rest, namely five porches, and in them lay many sick people such as the blind, the lame, and the paralyzed. Now there was a legend that an angel came down from time to time and stirred the water of this pool, and that when the water was stirred, whatever disease he had, the sick person who went into the pool first was healed. So the sick people were waiting in the porches by the pool of Bethesda for the water to be stirred.

Jerusalem, that is, the city of peace, speaks of religion in the Bible. It means that among the people who believe in religion there are many sick people. It means that there are the blind, the lame, the paralyzed, and many other sick people. And it means that in the religions of this world there is the story that among these many sick people, the one who runs best, that is, the person who is best at religious life and deeds, gets healed. Religion tells people to try hard. It tells them to do much good and to make much effort. But what about today’s text?

Human beings have the sickness of sin

Let us look from verse 5. *“Now a certain man was there who had an infirmity thirty-eight years. When Jesus saw him lying there, and knew that he already had been in that condition a long time, He said to him, ‘Do you want to be made well?’ The sick man answered Him, ‘Sir, I have no man to put me into the pool when the water is stirred up; but while I am coming, another steps down before me.’”* (John 5:5–7). Human beings have two kinds of sickness. There is the sickness of the body, and the other is the sickness of sin that is in the heart. Everyone is born with this sickness of sin in the heart from birth. The question is whether this sickness can be cured. The wish of a sick person is to be healed of his sickness. People are born of their parents with sin. *“Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, And in sin my mother conceived me”* (Psalm 51:5). All people are those who are born in sin, commit sin, and then die in sin and perish. The sickness of sin in human beings is a grave sickness.

The Bible says that because Adam and Eve, the ancestors of mankind, sinned against God, all people born as their descendants are born with sin. Let us look at Mark 7:20. *“And He said, ‘What comes out of a man, that defiles a man.’”* Jesus said that what comes out of a man’s heart defiles the man. Dear fellow believers, is food dirty, or is the human heart dirty? The human heart is dirtier than rotten food. Let us read verses 21 and 22 together. *“From within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lewdness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness.”* It is the word that there are evil thoughts in the human heart. Because a person has an evil heart, he comes to do evil deeds, and because he thinks evil thoughts, he lives an evil life. So a person needs to be healed of the sickness of sin that he

has. It means that everyone is born with this heart from his mother's womb. David, too, when he had committed sin, confessed, saying, "*Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, And in sin my mother conceived me.*"

What is that sickness of sin like? Such things as the evil thoughts of the heart and a lewd heart are the sickness. Fornication is also a sickness. Stealing is also a sickness. You must not think that stealing is not a sickness. It is said that there are women in whom kleptomania appears when they become pregnant. There is the story that a person who ordinarily restrained herself even when the thought of stealing arose becomes like that. Also, some people, whenever they go to the market, must without fail steal something and bring it home before they feel satisfied. This is precisely the sickness of sin.

These sicknesses appear when one is weak. They come out when one's flesh is weak. When a person is weak in body, weak mentally, and empty at heart, the sickness that was hidden inside recurs and comes out. He thinks evil thoughts; what was in the fornicating heart comes out as fornication; what was in the thieving heart actually becomes theft; what was in the murderous heart actually becomes murder; what was in the adulterous heart actually becomes adultery; what was in the covetous heart leads him to act according to his covetousness; what was in the wicked heart becomes wicked conduct; what was in the deceitful heart actually deceives; what was in the lewd heart becomes lewd conduct; and what was in this crazed heart—the evil eye, blasphemy, pride, and foolishness—actually appears in conduct. This was the sickness of sin in human beings. This is the sickness of the heart that we human beings are fundamentally born with from birth. There is no one who was not born with this sickness.

But what does the education of the world prescribe for the sickness of sin in human beings? It teaches, "Doing bad things

is bad, so you must not do them.” Ordinary people can keep this to a fair degree at first. Then, when they go to college, they usually let it all loose. College is the world of the young, and one may even call it a laboratory of sin. And yet they rationalize it and say that this is how one should behave in one’s college days. But in reality, it was a sickness one was born with from one’s mother’s womb. If the word of God says that human beings have the sickness of sin, a person must admit that there is the sickness of sin in his own heart. But the people who live a religious life in Jerusalem say that they have no sickness of sin. When the germs of sin are exposed on the outside, they try to erase only the sins that have been exposed. The germs of sin keep coming out and the person keeps trying to erase them, but until when can he erase them? They come out until he can no longer cope. It would be good if there were a hospital in this world that cured human beings of the sickness of sin, but wherever one goes in this world there is not a single place that cures human beings of the sickness of sin. They all tell you to diligently erase and remove the germs of sin on your own. Who fails to do it because he does not know that? The sickness of sin in human beings can be cured completely only by being healed by Jesus.

“Do you want to be made well?”

Here is the man who had been sick for thirty-eight years. This refers precisely to the person who had caught the sickness of sin. The man who had been sick for thirty-eight years had lain on his bed for thirty-eight years. By the pool of Bethesda, which had five porches, the man who had been sick for thirty-eight years lay waiting for someone’s help. This place was full of sick people. There were the paralyzed, who were skin and bones, and

there were also sick people such as the blind and the lame. Among them the man who had been sick for thirty-eight years, too, lay on his bed. If this man had fallen sick when he was twenty, he was fifty-eight years old; if he had fallen sick when he was ten, he was forty-eight; and if he had been sick from birth, he was thirty-eight. In those long years his family, too, had all left him. It was to a sick man like this that Jesus came.

If we look at the pool of Bethesda, the man who limps is staring only at the pool. “Just let the water move. Though my leg is not sound, still I can do it. If I watch the pool more diligently than others, notice it before others, and go in before others, I will change my lot.” He watches the pool with the conviction that he can do it. There were also the blind there. The blind man says, “Whatever you say, I, with my excellent hearing, am better off. Just let me hear the sound of the water moving. I, with my two sound legs, will go in before you.” The paralyzed man says, “However shriveled I am, you limp and you are blind, but my whole body is intact. I am better off than you. I can do it.” Those gathered by the pool of Bethesda were all people who thought that they could do it. But there was one man, the man who had been sick for thirty-eight years, who alone could do nothing by himself. For the man who had been sick for thirty-eight years, it was not “I can” but “I cannot.” Jesus passed by the many sick people who said they could do it and went to the sick man who said he could not.

And He spoke. *“Do you want to be made well?” (John 5:6).* “Yes, I want to be made well. But I have no man to put me into the pool.” Jesus heard the wish of this man who had been sick for thirty-eight years. *“Jesus said to him, ‘Rise, take up your bed and walk.’ And immediately the man was made well, took up his bed, and walked” (John 5:8–9).* The Bible records that when Jesus said, “Rise, take up your bed and walk,” the man who had

been sick for thirty-eight years was made well and walked. This was the power of Jesus; it was the power of the remission of sin that Jesus performed, which heals the sickness of sin that human beings suffer from.

Jesus came to the sickness of sin, which cannot be cured however much a person tries to cure it, and healed it with the power of the remission of sin, which removes sin once and for all. This was the gospel of the baptism and the blood that Jesus gave, and the remission of sin. Jesus healed once and for all sinners like the man who had been sick for thirty-eight years, who have the sickness of sin that is not cured no matter how much one tries to cure it, with the salvation of the Lord's remission of sin, and made them righteous. This was precisely the gospel of the remission of sin.

Why did Jesus not say to the blind man, "*Do you want to be made well?*" nor say it to the lame or the paralyzed, but ask only the man who had been sick for thirty-eight years whether he wanted to be made well? There is a reason for this. If Jesus asked the blind man whether he wanted to be made well, he is a person who would say, "Yes, I want to be made well. But do not worry. I can do it by my own strength, too. I only have to hear the sound of the water moving. Go about Your own business. I will mind my own." The blind man is a person who has a lot to say. The lame man, too, is a person who would say, "Stop talking nonsense and get out of the way. Once the water moves, I will go in by my own strength. Once I go in I will be healed, so what are You talking about? I can do it by my own strength." The wishes of all these sick people lay in the pool of Bethesda. Their hope was not in God, but in a story like a legend, in the stories of men.

Only the man who had been sick for thirty-eight years was healed

Because the man who had been sick for thirty-eight years had lain there for thirty-eight years, he could do nothing by his own strength. He could not go into the pool by his own strength; he could go in only if someone put him in. The man who had been sick for thirty-eight years needed a Savior. And this man alone met Jesus and was healed of his sickness. God wanted to teach us the truth through this text today. The Lord comes to, meets, and heals with His word the person who can do nothing by his own strength about the sickness of sin. Jesus does not meet those who go to church and think, “I am not good at tithing, I cannot manage the early-morning prayer, and I am not good at repenting. I am a little lacking, but still I do the rest to some extent.” Only to the man who had been sick for thirty-eight years, to this man alone, did Jesus come, ask him whether he wanted to be made well, tell him to rise, take up his bed and walk, and give him the blessing of healing. What is our remission of sin? What the remission of sin means is that only a person like the man who had been sick for thirty-eight years can receive it.

Though there are so many people in this world who believe in Jesus, so many religions, and so many people who live diligently and kindly, our Lord consistently says that they are sick. Saying that all people are sinners, sinners who can only go to hell, sinners who have caught a very grave sickness from which they can by no means be healed by themselves, our Lord shows us by this event that He saves people like the man who had been sick for thirty-eight years. Here there are some who have received the remission of sin and some who do not yet know. If you have received the remission of sin, it is not because you were a person who could do something even a little, like the

blind man or the lame man, a person who could live a good life, that you received it; but because, like the man who had been sick for thirty-eight years, it was impossible by your own strength, the Lord came and bestowed the grace of the remission of sin once and for all, and we received the remission of sin by believing that word of the remission of sin.

Mercy is to have pity on one who is utterly helpless, pitiful, and evil, and to wash away his sins. To save the life of one who is to die is mercy. We were people like this man who had been sick for thirty-eight years. Dear fellow believers, is it not so? It is so. We were born with this sickness—evil thoughts, a fornicating heart, and foolishness, that is, a crazed heart—but can you get rid of this heart by yourselves? A person cannot get rid of the sins he has committed and the sin that is in him by himself. Because he cannot, only when our Lord came and did it with the word of power, *“Rise, take up your bed and walk”* (John 5:8), could he walk. In exactly the same way, we, too, receive the remission of sin.

It is not because we lived kindly, lived a good life, lived decently, and gave much to charity that we received the remission of sin. It is not that Jesus came and saved a person who was a little lacking and could go to Heaven if only he did a little better. It is that our God bestowed the remission of sin on sinners for whom it was utterly impossible to go to Heaven, so that they met Jesus, were saved, and became those who rise and walk, those who enter Heaven. Dear beloved saints, is it not so? It is so. That Jesus removed our sins was His own power, 100%.

The man who fell among thieves and the good Samaritan

This word also appears in the Bible. Let us read from Luke 10:30. *“Then Jesus answered and said: ‘A certain man went down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among thieves, who stripped him of his clothing, wounded him, and departed, leaving him half dead. Now by chance a certain priest came down that road. And when he saw him, he passed by on the other side. Likewise a Levite, when he arrived at the place, came and looked, and passed by on the other side. But a certain Samaritan, as he journeyed, came where he was. And when he saw him, he had compassion. So he went to him and bandaged his wounds, pouring on oil and wine; and he set him on his own animal, brought him to an inn, and took care of him. On the next day, when he departed, he took out two denarii, gave them to the innkeeper, and said to him, “Take care of him; and whatever more you spend, when I come again, I will repay you.” So which of these three do you think was neighbor to him who fell among the thieves?’ And he said, ‘He who showed mercy on him.’ Then Jesus said to him, ‘Go and do likewise.’”*

A certain man was going down from Jerusalem, the city of religion, to Jericho, when he fell among thieves. The thieves who had been lying in wait blocked the road, surrounded him, and demanded that he hand over his money, but though they searched his whole body, he had no money at all. The thieves were angry and took even his outer garment and his undergarment, and beat him so badly that they left him half dead and departed. He was completely laid out and groaning.

Just then a priest who had been living a religious life in Jerusalem came down. What is a priest? He is a leader of religion. As he was coming down, walking with a dignified gait, from

somewhere he heard a strange sound, someone asking to be saved. Wondering whether it was the sound of an animal or a child crying, he listened carefully, and it was clearly a human voice. When he went near and looked, some man, covered in blood and naked, had collapsed and was barely managing to ask to be saved. The thieves had already all run away. But this priest, when he saw that man, quietly stepped aside and passed by on the other side.

Second, a Levite came down. Who is a Levite? If the priest is a religious leader, the Levite refers to the church members who believe in God. The Levite, too, met the man who had fallen among thieves at the very same spot, but likewise turned aside and went away. Where did he go? To Jericho. Jericho means ‘fragrance,’ that is, the world. It means that the religious leader and the church member alike ended up going down to the world. But what did the Samaritan do? The Samaritan was journeying through Jerusalem. Only after journeying there did he say, “This place is splendid on the outside, but there is nothing at all inside. It is a whitewashed tomb. This city is going to perish in the future.”

The Jews despised the Samaritans. But this Samaritan, coming along riding on a donkey, saw the man who had fallen among thieves, got down, poured wine and poured oil on his wounds and bandaged them, set him on his own animal, and brought him to an inn. And he gave the innkeeper two denarii and told him to take care of this man, and that if it cost more, he would repay him when he came back.

Salvation does not lie in deeds

The background of this word is as follows. A lawyer, a teacher of the Law, asked Jesus, “*What shall I do to inherit eternal life?*” In the Law and the commandments there are 613 items. They are “Do” and “Do not.” The most simply condensed of them are the Ten Commandments. The first is, you shall have no other gods before Me; the second, you shall not make an idol or bow down to it; the third, you shall not take the name of God in vain; the fourth, keep the Sabbath; the fifth, honor your parents; and then, you shall not murder, you shall not commit adultery, you shall not steal, you shall not bear false witness, and you shall not covet. When the lawyer asked what deeds he should do to obtain eternal life, in which a person lives happily in Heaven forever, Jesus gave him this example of the man who fell among thieves.

What He is saying here is that our being saved and becoming righteous does not lie in our own deeds. It does not lie in keeping the Law. Just as by the pool of Bethesda, too, all the people who strove to be healed by their deeds were excluded and only the one man who had been sick for thirty-eight years, who could do nothing, was healed, so here, too, the priest and the Levite were outside salvation. What kind of person alone is saved? The person for whom it does not work no matter how hard he tries, the person who has given up on himself. “Only if You save me, only if You remove all my sins, can I receive the remission of sin, go to Heaven, and obtain eternal life; by my own efforts it is utterly impossible.” It is that only the person who gave up his own efforts met the Lord and was saved.

The priest and the Levite refer to the people who live a religious life, that is, those who, while believing in God, have received the remission of original sin and strive to receive the

remission of their personal sins by offering prayers of repentance every day. But what does God say to us? He says that God sent His Son Jesus and removed all our sins through Jesus. He says that God has saved us and that we have been saved through faith. God is saying that we sinners, a breed that can do no righteousness at all and can only do bad things, have been saved because God has saved us.

Both the priest and the Levite were corrupted. Even if one believes in Jesus, if one is not born again, though one says that going to church and believing is good and that doing good is good, the longer one believes, the more one ends up being corrupted without realizing it. So one falls into Jericho, into the fragrance of the world, creaks along, and finally ends up going to hell.

Then who are the people whom God the Father saved by sending His Son Jesus? The first is the man who fell among thieves, the second is the man who had been sick for thirty-eight years, and the third is the woman caught in the very act of adultery. The Bible says that only such people were saved. It says that only the person whose sins are clearly exposed and who clearly knows what kind of person he is, and who clearly believes the word of God that Jesus has saved him, was saved.

What the Bible says is that the sinner who can do nothing is saved. It is that only the person who says, "I am a sinner who can only go to hell," is saved. If one has even a hair's breadth of sin, one goes to hell. That is how it is according to the law of God. Therefore, if you think that you have sin even as much as a speck, you must know that "I am going to hell; even though I do not want to go, I am going." According to the law of God, the wages of sin is death. To say that I am a sinner is to say that I am a person who is going to hell. Only when one knows and believes how Jesus has saved him is one saved.

How did we become righteous?

Jesus came to this earth to save sinners. There is something Jesus did when He came to this earth. How did Jesus remove our sins? Jesus, though He is God, came as a man in order to save mankind. Having come as a man, when He was thirty years old He came to John the Baptist and sought to be baptized on His head. This word baptism refers to the washing away of sin. Laying hands on the head comes from the sacrifices of the Old Testament. In the Old Testament, when a person had sinned, he brought an animal as a sacrificial offering, laid his hands on the head of the animal, and confessed his sins, saying, “God, I have committed the sin of murder. I have committed the sin of adultery. I have committed the sin of theft.” Then that sin passed on to the animal, and the animal died in the person’s place and shed its blood, and that blood was put on the horns of the altar of burnt offering. By passing the sin on to the animal that had no sin and making it an animal with sin, and by killing that animal, God delivered that person from sin.

In exactly the same way, Jesus came to this earth some two thousand years ago and was baptized by John the Baptist. He received it from the representative of mankind. Who is the representative of our country? The president. Whether we like him or not, the president is the representative of our country. Whatever the president says when he goes abroad, he says on behalf of the whole people. Though we did not say a single word, if the president says he will give aid, it means that you and I are all giving aid, and if he says he will go to war, it means that we go to war even though we do not want to. It means that by this principle of representation, John the Baptist laid his hands on the head of Jesus and baptized Him.

Let us look from Matthew 3:13. *“Then Jesus came from*

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

Jesus was baptized by John the Baptist. John the Baptist is the representative of mankind. Matthew chapter 11 says that he is 'the greatest among those born of women.' Why did Jesus have to be baptized? He was baptized in order to remove our sins. What happened when He was baptized? Sin passed on. The word baptism means to pass on, to be transferred, to be buried, to be washed. Because our sins are transferred onto the body of Jesus, because our sins pass on to Him, Jesus dies in our place, and the sin in our hearts is surely washed away. That is the reason Jesus came to this earth and was baptized.

What sins passed on to the head of Jesus? All sins passed on. It is the word that the sins of all people passed on. When? When Jesus was baptized by John. When Jesus went into the water and came up, the gate of Heaven was opened and there came a voice saying, "*This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased*" (Matthew 3:17). It is the word that My Son has taken charge of all your sins, has washed away all your sins, and has become your Savior. Is this a doctrine? It is the truth. If Jesus had not come to this earth and been baptized, if He had not taken charge of your sins and mine, then we, too, who sin so diligently and are so lacking, would each be one of the priests and one of the Levites. We, too, would each be one of the blind, the lame, and

the paralyzed. Then how were we able to be saved? Because Jesus was baptized by John, our sins passed on there, and by our believing that, the sin in our hearts was washed away.

He said that it is fitting to fulfill all righteousness. Righteousness is the Chinese character 義, 'righteous.' In Chinese characters it is the character 羊, 'sheep,' with the character 我, 'I,' beneath it. It means that my becoming righteous, my becoming without sin, was accomplished through the Sheep. In John 1:29 it says, "*Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!*" Who is this Lamb? It is that because the Son of God, as the Lamb, was baptized and took charge of all my sins, I became a righteous person, a person without sin. Because Chinese characters are ideographs, when we go to China to preach the gospel, we can teach it exactly with this character. "You are a sinner who commits sin every day and can only go to hell, but because Jesus, as the Lamb, was sacrificed for you, you have become righteous." It is a very good character for preaching the gospel.

How did you and I become righteous? We were fundamentally sinners. Because we were born with sin in our hearts, we were people who could only commit sin all our lives. Then how were we able to become people without sin, become the children of God, and become people who go to the kingdom of God? It is that it came about precisely through Jesus, through believing in the Savior.

Our Lord has saved us from all the sins of the world

"Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!" Did Jesus take away the sin of the world, or did He not?

He took it away. Taking the time of Jesus' coming as the standard, the time after it is called A.D., and the time before it B.C., that is, before the coming of Jesus Christ. Our Lord came to this earth, was baptized by John, bore all the sins of mankind, and died on the Cross at the age of thirty-three. It is that all these things—the Lord's being baptized, His dying on the Cross, and His rising again on the third day after His death and sitting at the right hand of the throne of God—are precisely our salvation. Who is He? He is the Alpha and the Omega, the One who made and governs this whole world, and the Savior who removed the sins of all the people of the world. Two thousand years ago, our Lord came to this earth and took charge of the sin of the world with the baptism He received from John. Even before you and I were born, about two thousand years ago, He took charge of your sins and mine. It is the word that although we had not yet been born and had not yet committed sin, Jesus took an advance on the sins of the people living in this age and took charge of them all beforehand. Because He is God, He was able to do this.

Dear fellow believers, what is an advance? Drawing money in advance and using it is an advance. If, even before doing the work, one says, "Boss, there is trouble at home and I have no money for living expenses. Please advance me three months' worth," the master trusts that person and advances him three months' worth. Then, until he has worked for three months, there is no need to pay him separately. It is because he has already received it all at once. It is the word that Jesus came to this world in order to let us go to Heaven, and took charge, once and for all, of all the sins that all people born from Adam and Eve until the day this world ends harbor in their hearts and commit in their deeds.

He took away the sin of the world once and for all. The word that He took it away means that it all passed on. The sins we

commit throughout our lives passed on to Jesus once and for all through John the Baptist. So to say that He took away the sin of the world is to say that He took our sins upon Himself, that He had them transferred to Him. Do you and I commit sin in this world, or do we not? We do. Did Jesus take away the sins we have committed up to this very hour, or did He not? He took them away. Did they pass on to Jesus, or did they not? They passed on. We must realize this. Since Jesus took away the sin of the world, then do I have sin, or do I not? Realizing that I have no sin is precisely salvation. That is precisely realizing the Way to go to the kingdom of heaven. It is said that in the old days the Taoist masters, in order to attain the Way, did not even come down to their homes but cultivated the Way in the mountains. But where is that Way? It was precisely in Jesus. *“I am the way, the truth, and the life.”* Jesus is precisely the way, the truth, and the life. So everyone must know Jesus.

Have the sins we have committed until now passed on to Jesus? They have passed on. Since Jesus took charge of our sins when He was thirty years old with the baptism He received from John, it was some two thousand years ago that He bore exactly all your sins and mine. We receive the remission of sin by looking upon and believing that our Lord removed sin long ago. It says, *“Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, Whose sin is covered”* (Psalm 32:1). It is not through being one who runs well, but by the will of God, by the grace of God, that one is saved. God says that one is not saved by doing good well, but that one is saved by knowing, believing, and realizing this truth that Jesus has removed all my sins.

Jesus took away all your sins and mine, the sin of the world, with the baptism He received from John. Then is the sin I commit tomorrow the sin of the world, or is it not? The sin I commit tomorrow is also the sin of the world. The sin I commit

the day after tomorrow is also the sin of the world, and the sins we commit until we go into the earth are also the sin of the world. The sins our descendants commit are also the sin of the world. Since we have received the remission of sin, we have no sin; then does it mean that tomorrow, too, we will commit sin as we please because we have no sin? That is not it. It does not mean that we deliberately sin as we please because we have no sin, but that because we were born fundamentally as sinners, we can only live as sinners all our lives. It is that our Lord saved human beings who can only commit sin. So because our Lord has removed even the sin we commit tomorrow, we have been saved through faith.

Sin is not committed deliberately. It is committed because we are weak. Though we know that sin is not right, we commit sin because the flesh is weak, the heart is weak, and the will is weak. People do dislike sin. Though they know it is not right, it turns out that way because they are weak. Why does a flower bloom as that flower? It blooms because it is originally that kind of seed. However hard a blue flower tries, saying, "I will bloom only as a white flower," blue markings appear. It is because it cannot overcome what is inside it. We, too, commit sin because we are weak, even though we hate to commit sin. Our Lord has saved us from all these sins. It is because the Creator, knowing all the sins we would commit, took charge even of those sins that we have been saved through faith; if He said, "I will remit the sins you have committed up to today. If you commit sin from tomorrow on, you go to hell," there would not be a single person who could be saved. That is why the Bible said, "*There is none righteous, no, not one*" (Romans 3:10). But our Lord established another law, namely the law of faith. He is saying that God has made all people righteous through the one righteousness of God. It says, "*to demonstrate His righteousness, because in His*

forbearance God had passed over the sins that were previously committed.”

Our Lord came to this earth, took charge of all these sins that we commit every day, said on the Cross that it was finished, and died. He shed all His blood and received all the judgment. And He rose again on the third day and is now at the right hand of the throne of God. It is the word that, being there, He looks at human beings who commit sin every day in the present tense and has passed over the sins previously committed. To pass over means to look past, to regard as not important. “That is a sin for which I have already paid the full price. The sins you commit are sins that I took charge of entirely with the baptism I received from John at the Jordan River and for which I paid the full price on the Cross. Though you commit sin in the present tense, that sin is a sin for which I already paid the full price long ago. Therefore I cannot judge it.” It is the word that He can never judge those who believe in Him. This is precisely how our Lord has saved us.

Our Lord came to this earth and, by being baptized by John at the Jordan River, by receiving the judgment on the Cross, and by rising again, saved those who can only commit sin all their lives. Because the infinite One, who is now at the right hand of the throne of God, in eternal time, has remitted all the sins that people commit within the finite time of this world, we are saved by believing in Him. Jesus is God. He is our Savior, and He is also our Prophet, and He is also the High Priest who took all our sins upon Himself and settled them. That is why the Book of Hebrews, too, says that Jesus is our High Priest.

The remission of sin received by believing the word

Dear beloved saints, your receiving and my receiving the remission of sin is the same as this word: *“Jesus said to him, ‘Rise, take up your bed and walk.’ And immediately the man was made well, took up his bed, and walked.”* Our Lord, removing our sins, said to us, *“Son, your sins are forgiven you”* (Mark 2:5), *“It is finished!”* and *“where there is remission of these, there is no longer an offering for sin”* (Hebrews 10:18). Because our God removed all our sins and spoke to us, we received the remission of sin by believing that word. To this man who had been sick for thirty-eight years Jesus spoke a simple word. *“Rise, take up your bed and walk.”* By believing that word, the sick man rose, took up his bed, and walked. We must know that our Lord saved the person who knows the fact that he absolutely can only go to hell. Do you and I believe in this gospel? It is said that with the heart one believes and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. If you believe with the heart, confess with the mouth.

Dear beloved saints, our Lord told us to rise, take up our bed and walk, and saved us. Our having received the remission of sin is that we received the remission of sin through Jesus. ☒

Sermon 3 by Paul C. Jong

A person with sin must meet Jesus the Savior

< John 5:1-15 >

“After this there was a feast of the Jews, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem. Now there is in Jerusalem by the Sheep Gate a pool, which is called in Hebrew, Bethesda, having five porches. In these lay a great multitude of sick people, blind, lame, paralyzed, waiting for the moving of the water. For an angel went down at a certain time into the pool and stirred up the water; then whoever stepped in first, after the stirring of the water, was made well of whatever disease he had. Now a certain man was there who had an infirmity thirty-eight years. When Jesus saw him lying there, and knew that he already had been in that condition a long time, He said to him, ‘Do you want to be made well?’ The sick man answered Him, ‘Sir, I have no man to put me into the pool when the water is stirred up; but while I am coming, another steps down before me.’ Jesus said to him, ‘Rise, take up your bed and walk.’ And immediately the man was made well, took up his bed, and walked. And that day was the Sabbath. The Jews therefore said to him who was cured, ‘It is the Sabbath; it is not lawful for you to carry your bed.’ He answered them, ‘He who made me well said to me, “Take up your bed and walk.”’ Then they asked him, ‘Who is the Man who said to you, “Take up your bed and walk”?’ But the one who was healed did not know who it was, for Jesus had withdrawn, a multitude being in that place. Afterward Jesus found him in

the temple, and said to him, ‘See, you have been made well. Sin no more, lest a worse thing come upon you.’ The man departed and told the Jews that it was Jesus who had made him well.”

I intend to share the word under the title that a person with sin must meet Jesus Christ the Savior, not the religions of the world, through faith. If we look at the word from verse 1 to verse 4, the sick people by the pool of Bethesda appear. In the myths and religions that human beings have made, there are many groundless things.

Here at the pool of Bethesda, too, there was a myth that an angel came down and stirred the water of the pool, and that whoever went in first at that time was healed of whatever disease he had. So many people were gathered by the pool of Bethesda. Was there really anyone who was healed of his sickness? Perhaps there were some who were healed, but a myth is a made-up story. Here, too, is there not a story handed down about a place called Morning Pond? Where the pond is, a certain rich man used to live, and a Buddhist monk went to the gate of that house, beat his wooden gong, and asked for alms, but the master of the house would not give any. The monk beat his wooden gong until evening, and the master of the house said he would never give, and the two of them had a battle of nerves. In the end the master of the house came out, snatched the alms bowl, flung it down, and trampled it underfoot, and the monk, unable even to get angry, clicked his tongue and went back. But that night, it is said, so much rain suddenly fell that the house was submerged in water before the rich man’s family even had time to flee. The next morning, they say, that rich man’s house was seen completely submerged in water, and so it was given the name

Morning Pond. If you go there, there is even a signboard on which that story is written. But these stories are all stories like myths. The stories that Park Hyeokgeose came out of an egg, and so the ancestor of the Park clan is an egg, are all groundless, too.

Jesus, who raised up the man who had been sick for thirty-eight years

Through this text we can know that the religions of the world could not heal these many sick people. But Jesus Christ met the man who had been sick for thirty-eight years and asked, “*Do you want to be made well?*” (*John 5:6*) and when the sick man answered that he had no man to put him into the pool, He told him to rise, take up his bed and walk. He was a sick man who for thirty-eight years could neither rise nor walk. As Jesus went about by the pool of Bethesda, He went to that man, who could not go into the pool by his own strength, and knowing that his sickness had lasted a long time, He asked him whether he wanted to be made well and said to him, rise, take up your bed and walk, and that man rose up at once. He rose, shouldered the bed on which he had been lying, and walked.

That day was the Sabbath. So the Jews hated Him, saying, why did He heal a sickness on the Sabbath, and why does the man who was healed carry his bed about? The religions of this world are groundless. They say that if you believe in Buddhism you will be healed of sickness and also go to paradise, but those are groundless words. Just as the man who had been sick for thirty-eight years could not rise by his own strength, they are of no use at all. They are nothing but glib talk. Even what Christians say, “If you believe in Jesus you go to Heaven,” is

nothing more than glib talk if there is no being born again. They only say glibly that if you believe in Jesus your sins disappear, but in reality the sins do not disappear, one cannot go to Heaven either, and one is even more distressed after believing in Jesus.

But here Jesus came to the sick man, asked him whether he wanted to be made well, and told him to rise, take up his bed and walk, and that man was made well at once, took up his bed, and walked. Believing in religions and myths, and believing that Jesus Christ the Son of God came to this earth, was baptized by John, shed His blood and died on the Cross, rose again, and saved us, are completely different things. Jesus Christ actually removes our sins, sends us to Heaven, and heals our sicknesses, too, but the religions and myths of the world are groundless. They only talk glibly and actually do nothing for us. While telling people to believe in Jesus, they tell them to bring money, to be faithful and to serve, and they say that to receive the remission of sin one must offer prayers of repentance.

Hunters of souls

In the Catholic Church they perform the sacrament of confession. A believer goes to a priest and makes his confession, and it does not matter whether he does it once a month or several times, and some people even do it once a day. When he goes to the priest and confesses the sins he has committed, the priest says to him, "I remit your sins," and then that believer goes back with a lighter heart. So in the Catholic Church the priest has authority, and in Christianity offering prayers of repentance has authority. There is a similarity between the Catholic Church and Christianity, and it is that the church leader makes gestures and speaks as though he were removing the sins of the church

members. That is of no use at all.

We receive the remission of sin by believing in that salvation in which Jesus Christ the Son of God was baptized by John the Baptist, was crucified and died, rose again from the dead, and saved us. We have no sin because Jesus has removed your sins and mine; for a religious leader to say, “I remit your sins,” is useless talk. That is religious fraud. For example, there was a person in our fellowship, who has since left, who said, “Unless you confess before me the sins you have committed, the sin does not disappear from your heart,” and that is exactly the same as what a Catholic priest does. It is telling people to confess their sins to him. If one confesses sins to a person, do not both of their faces burn with shame? The Bible does not say so.

The Bible says that Jesus was baptized by John, was crucified, rose again from the dead, and saved us; it does not tell you to go to your guide and report one by one the sins you have committed. That is religious fraud. People do that in order to get hold of another person’s weakness of having sinned and to control him as they please, to extract money from him if he does not do as they say, and to spread it among people and disgrace him. Such a person is called a hunter of souls.

So when the members of our fellowship try to tell me, “There is something I want to tell you. In the old days I did such a wrong...,” I say this: “Do not tell me; tell God. Jesus Christ the Son of God, who was baptized by John, died on the Cross, rose again from the dead, and saved you—that Jesus is precisely God and your Savior. Tell Him and believe what He has done. Then you are saved. If you tell me, later it will be awkward for us to look each other in the face.” Jesus told us not to do such things. *“Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden” (Matthew 11:28)*. Jesus told us to come to Him; has He ever told us to go to a person? But in Catholicism it is still laid down as law even

now. Priests, too, must make their confession to a priest, and even the Pope must do so. Did Jesus tell us to make confession to one another? He did not. Religions and stories like myths have no power and are nothing more than groundless stories.

The children of God have no sin

But Jesus Christ the Son of God has power, and He is the God of our salvation, who took charge of our sins, received the judgment, and rose again from the dead. The text tells us this. If one believes that Jesus was baptized by John, died on the Cross, and rose again from the dead, one receives the remission of sin. It is because He is God, equal with God. He is God and our Savior. Therefore, if one believes that word, one becomes a child of God. One can also go to Heaven.

But when we say that we believe in Jesus and have no sin, that we have become righteous, not only the people who are sunk in the religions of the world but even the people who are sunk in Christianity press us hard, saying we are wrong: “It says there is none righteous, no, not one, so how can you say you are righteous?” Such people are like that because they are religious people, whereas we are people of faith. One who looks upon and believes what God has done is a person of faith, whereas religion is something made up by one’s own thoughts. Making up one’s own ideas about Jesus and the doctrine of the Cross, too, and believing them as they are—that is religion.

When we tell people that we have no sin, we meet people who say, “How can you say you have no sin? Are your deeds that perfect? How can you say you have no sin, when you commit sins and do many things wrong?” Then we need only think, “He is a religious person who has not been born again,”

and pity him. It is something said because he has not yet experienced being born again. Do you know how a person is born again? To be born again means to be born anew, to be born twice. Once one is born as a sinner, and once one receives the remission of sin by believing in that salvation by which Jesus Christ saved us, and is born again. A person who has been born twice has no sin. He is a child of God.

The children of God have no sin. The children of God are righteous. When we say such things, that person is ashamed. If we ask, "There is sin in your heart, and there is no sin in my heart. Do you have sin?" though he attacks us religiously, he answers that he has sin. How can a person who has sin be called a person who believes in Jesus? If one is a sinner before believing in Jesus and still a sinner after believing, we can teach and lead that person to believe in Jesus rightly. The Bible says that among the many sick people lying by the pool of Bethesda, only the one man who had been sick for thirty-eight years was healed of his sickness by the power of Jesus.

We must believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit unconditionally

Since he lived for thirty-eight years lying down, having others take care of his urine and stool, how miserably he must have lived! We, too, must look at our own state. If I have sin, I go to hell. If we look at whether or not we commit sin in the course of a day, and whether or not we have lived according to God's commands, then if we have not lived so, we have sin, and if we have sin, we go to hell. It is because the wages of sin is death. If we know that we have sin, we must know that we are going to hell, and if we do not want to go to hell, we must know

and believe in our hearts that Jesus has become our Savior, that He came to this earth, was baptized by John, was crucified, rose again from the dead, and saved us. If we believe, we obtain salvation, and if we do not believe, we go to hell.

If, while standing in a position to go to hell, one says, "Should I believe in Jesus, or is it all right not to believe?" one is quibbling because one still does not know that one is a sinner and does not know that one is a person going to hell. One must really know that one has sin and that, according to the law of God, one is a person going to hell. Then the right to choose is not one's own. One must believe unconditionally. If one does not believe, one goes to hell. Where does a person who has sin and is going to hell have the leisure to quibble over whether that denomination is an orthodox denomination or not?

What I mean is, where does a person who has fallen into the water have the time to quibble over whether it is a leper who pulls him out or a person with filth on his hands who pulls him out? If one is a person who has fallen into the water and is now about to die, then if someone says he will pull one out, should one not take hold of anyone's hand and get out of the water? Should one not be saved? If one quibbles, saying, "You do not seem to be an orthodox denomination," it is because one still does not know that one is going to hell. If one knows the fact that one is going to hell, one is thankful to the person who tells one the gospel.

If there is anyone among you, too, who says, "I believe in Jesus, but I do not know whether I have been born again or not," it is because you still do not know your own state. You are a person going to hell, so is this any time to be quibbling? If you do not know whether you believe or not, what will you do if you die even this very night? If you die, you go to hell. It is said that once one dies, one is judged. Why is one judged? One is judged

because one has sin. If one has no sin, one is not judged. Socrates said, know yourself, and because you do not know your own state, you do not even know whether you believe in Jesus or not. We must believe unconditionally.

We are people who go to hell, because we were born from our mother's womb and have committed sin while living this long on this earth. If one has sin even as much as a finger, one goes to hell, but we are people who have sins piled up like mountains. We have enough sin to go to hell hundreds of millions of times and more. So there is no room for choice. Unconditionally, we must believe in that Jesus, who was baptized by John, died on the Cross, rose again from the dead, and saved you and me from sin, as the Savior of you and me. It means that we must accept Him unconditionally.

God has saved us, so there is nothing to pick and choose about. We must accept it unconditionally. If we do not accept it, we go to hell. We grow old quickly, too. And if one does not accept Jesus and lives as a sinner, one lives receiving the curse, the opposite of happiness, the opposite of blessing. However hard one tries, one cannot live. But if one believes, if one says, "God, please help me," He gives strength, gives health, and helps. There is no place where God is not. If we ask Him to help, He helps us through people, or makes those who have no strength strong, or lets health be restored, or helps us somehow or other. But if one does not believe, one lives a shabby life, trampled on all one's life, and finally goes to hell.

Do you know how good God is? He is far better than your parents. Do you know how powerful God is? He is great beyond comparison with the power of your parents. And the heart with which God loves you and me is far greater than the love with which your parents love you. Whether we are fine people or not, if we believe that Jesus is our God and has saved us, then

regardless of whether we pray well or not, if we pray to Him for help, He is the One who helps us.

But not to believe is the same as one's refusing the blessing of God. It is the same as refusing to eat when delicious food is given, saying no when He wants to give much money, too, and saying no when He wants to give health and blessing, too. Then how does one mean to live? One means to live by one's own strength. Such people are the ones who do not believe.

God makes the sunlight shine equally on the evil and on the good. He is not One who gives only shade to the evil because they are evil and warm sunshine to the righteous because they are righteous. On God's side, He loves them alike. That is how it is until they are judged. However much I try to refuse the love of God, He keeps shining the love of God on me. He shines it only while we are alive, and from the moment we die, we can only wait for the day of judgment. As the saying goes, even a mouse hole has its day of sunshine; the sunlight shines even into a mouse hole. But if one is deep down inside, one cannot see the sunlight. If one comes out only a little, one can see the warm and bright light.

Faith is opening the door of the heart and acknowledging

Even if one is lacking, one need only come out and be willing to believe in Jesus. If one comes out only a little before the light, willing to believe, saying, "I know nothing, but I have heard thousands of times that Jesus is the Savior who took charge of the sins of mankind," Jesus knows it all. And He shines the light of salvation. Then one need only believe with the heart. One need only accept it in the heart. Just as one looks at a flower and

acknowledges in the heart, “Oh, the flower is pretty. The pussy willows are pretty,” acknowledging the fact as it is, accepting the fact as it is—this is faith. There is no need for emotions, either. As one lives on this earth, one comes to know and comes to feel it. So I want all of you to believe. If one is stubborn to the end and does not believe, one is inviting the curse on oneself. What is so great about you that you do not believe? Where is there any reason not to believe?

There are people who, though their bodies are not sound, adamantly refuse help. For such a person to climb the stairs alone from down there to up here takes half a day. To lift one leg, he must strain with all his might for a long while, and then rest again to recover his strength before lifting the next leg. So when the person beside him says, “I will help you just up to there. You can go alone on the level ground,” and takes his arm to help him, he shakes him off violently, saying, what are you doing, I can walk, too. Even when he says, “I know that, but it is so hard here, so could I not help you a little while I am here?” he scowls, shakes him off, and does not accept the help. At such a time the person who was going to help clicks his tongue inwardly and feels frustrated. What he means is, if you were healthy, what need would there be for me to help you? I am trying to help you because you are weak and I am beside you, so why do you refuse so?

Jesus Christ, who is God, came to this earth to save us, was baptized by John the Baptist, was crucified, shed His blood and died, rose again from the dead, and accomplished all the work of salvation; yet if there is a person who says, “I will not believe. I do not want to,” God says, “All right, believe when you want to believe. I do this because I am afraid you will go to hell. Do you not have sin in your heart now? Believe. If you believe, your sin disappears. I have removed all your sins. And if you believe,

you and I come into fellowship. If you do not believe, you and I are enemies.”

To refuse love becomes a tremendous sin. When God says that He loves you so, that He has removed your sins, that you are His child and His beloved, what is to be done if you do not believe, if you do not open the door of your heart? One need only open the door of the heart—acknowledging that this flower is red and pretty is faith—but one does not acknowledge it. So as a result one becomes an enemy of God. Though God sent His own Son, passed sin on to the Son, had the Son nailed to the Cross and put to death, and raised Him from the dead and saved us, if one does not accept it, that person is the enemy of enemies of God. “In order not to send you to hell, I sent My Son, passed your sins on to Him, judged Him and put Him to death, and raised Him again, and saved you, and yet you do not accept it? Accept it. I will wait a little longer.” That is what God does.

Believe in the Lord and be saved, and receive help through faith

Talking about these things reminds me of the old days on Gadeokdo. Beside Gadeokdo there is an island called Nulchari, and when I was planting a church on Gadeokdo and building a chapel and so on, I felt pity for the people and children there, and whenever I had time I would call the children of the seashore together. When I said, “Children, gather round here. I will tell you an interesting story,” at first they would not come, but then they came one by one, and later I do not know how many children came. So I told them about Jesus. At that time I did not know the gospel of the baptism, so when I told them, as if reading a storybook, “You did wrong and ought to be punished

and beaten, but Jesus bore your sins and went to the Cross and was nailed to it. Just think once of being nailed. How much it must have hurt! Nails were driven into His feet, too, and He wore a crown of thorns on His head,” the children cried and wailed and made a great commotion. When I said, “Jesus did this because He loves you. But Jesus, having great power, died and rose again. Can you accept in your hearts that Jesus sacrificed Himself, suffered pain, and died for you? Do you believe it in your hearts?” there were children who said they accepted it, and we rejoiced together that they had been saved. If I went to Nulchari now, those children would all be married by now.

Long ago I received a small gospel booklet of the Gospel of Matthew, read it all in one sitting, and believed at once. Before reading it I was a person who did not believe, but after reading it all I had become a person who believed. And I went out and began to tell the adults, too. Even before I went to church, when I told them that Jesus is such a One, the adults also listened. I went to a big public square and began my talk, saying, “Dear fellow citizens, today I would like to bring you good news. I would be grateful if you would stop your passing steps and listen to my story for a moment.” Then some people passed by cursing me as crazy, some passed by whistling, and some stood in front and listened to it all for more than thirty minutes. Even before I believed in Jesus, I looked at the Bible and thought, Jesus is such a One, so what reason is there for me not to believe? If I do not believe, it is my own fault—and I believed at once. He is the One who will save His people from their sins, so where is there any reason not to believe?

Dear fellow believers, I want you to believe. Believe and pray, open the door of your heart, open the door of your heart when you listen to the word, too, and when things are hard as you live, ask Him to help you. “God, give me strength. Give me

faith. Bless me. Give me power. Give me wisdom, too. Give me understanding, too.” If you ask unconditionally, God is pleased. If you ask, He likes it. If you do not ask, and say, “I will live by my own strength,” God dislikes it. He says, “Your strength does not amount to much. Seek help from Me.”

Those who believe spread this gospel. Those who have met the Lord accept in their hearts and believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God and the Savior who was baptized by John the Baptist. Those who do not believe go to hell, but those who accept it in their hearts and believe receive the remission of sin and come to enter Heaven. And on this earth, too, they become the people of God, and whenever they ask for help in life, He never refuses. Because He is Almighty God, whenever we ask for help, He grants it. Even before you sleep, if you are afraid and have many worries in your heart, say, “Help me, protect me, fill me, bless me, give me power.” It is all right to pray in short and plain words, without flowery words in your prayer. Even with just that much, He understands it all and helps with it all.

I want you to become believers, being saved and also receiving help, and, until the day the Lord comes to this earth, until the day we go before the Lord, always seeking help and seeking faith, receiving the blessing of the Lord, living the rest of your lives well and happily, and then meeting the Lord. I will close the message here. ☒

Sermon 4 by Paul C. Jong

Jesus Christ, who performed the office of the eternal Priest

< John 5:24-29 >

“Most assuredly, I say to you, he who hears My word and believes in Him who sent Me has everlasting life, and shall not come into judgment, but has passed from death into life. Most assuredly, I say to you, the hour is coming, and now is, when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God; and those who hear will live. For as the Father has life in Himself, so He has granted the Son to have life in Himself, and has given Him authority to execute judgment also, because He is the Son of Man. Do not marvel at this; for the hour is coming in which all who are in the graves will hear His voice and come forth—those who have done good, to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil, to the resurrection of condemnation.”

The eternal Priest according to the order of Melchizedek

These days we are sharing the word about the office of the eternal Priest, in which Jesus Christ the Son of God, according to the order of Melchizedek, came to this earth and saved us. I cannot tell you how fortunate this is and how thankful I am. Melchizedek is recorded in Genesis chapter 14, recorded in Psalm 110:4, and recorded in the Book of Hebrews.

In terms of time, the interval is very great. God had Genesis recorded through Moses; the history of faith that runs from Adam and Eve to Seth passed through Enoch and Methuselah, and in the days of Noah the world perished in the Flood, and then mankind flourished anew through the family of Noah, and through the event of the Tower of Babel the language of mankind was divided from a single language. After that comes Abraham. While Abraham was living in a Gentile land, he was called by God and came out with his nephew, and God showed him the land of Canaan and said that He would give that land to him and his descendants. From there Abraham followed the word, and Abraham begot Isaac, Isaac begot Jacob, and Jacob begot twelve sons, and at that time a famine came and they went into the land of Egypt.

Having gone into the land of Egypt, they served as slaves for 400 years. And God delivered them out through Moses. God raised up Joshua, the servant of Moses, and the people of Israel entered the land of Canaan, and while they lived in the land of Canaan, Joshua also died and it became the period of the judges, and they lived in a state of having no king and no leader. So they lived having forsaken God, but God raised up the prophet Samuel and preserved the nation of Israel, and the people who come out of that are Saul and King David. From that time the age of the monarchy unfolds. The nation of Israel continued on and then was divided into south and north, and Jeroboam in the north served idols. After that, the north fell to Assyria and the south to Babylon.

When they had fallen and were in the state of having completely lost their nation, God established the new covenant through the prophet Jeremiah. "Since you have one-sidedly broken the first covenant that you made with Me, I will establish a new covenant and write My law of salvation in your hearts and

minds.” So it is the word that He gives us salvation. And so Jesus Christ was born on this earth and the New Testament age came. Two thousand years have passed from the beginning of the New Testament age until now. Even leaving aside the four thousand years of the Old Testament age, two thousand years of the New Testament age have passed. What I am now saying is that after all this time, through the line of Melchizedek, Jesus Christ the Son of God came to this earth, carried out the office of the eternal Priest, saved you and me from sin, and made us the people of God.

I spoke of this part of John chapter 5 last time, too, and I am speaking of it today as well. Jesus Christ is the One who, according to the order of Melchizedek, became the eternal High Priest and came to remove our sins. In the text we are seeing Him ministering on this earth.

Jesus, as the One who lives forever, speaks eternal things to us

Let us read verse 24 once. *“Most assuredly, I say to you, he who hears My word and believes in Him who sent Me has everlasting life, and shall not come into judgment, but has passed from death into life.”* Because Jesus is the One who lives forever, He speaks of eternal things without hesitation, transcending time and space. He speaks of eternal life, He speaks of judgment, and He speaks of obtaining new life, too. It is a word that only the eternal One can speak. Because we are bound by time and space, when we speak of some event we can only speak of what happened in the very short time of that moment; but what I am saying is that Jesus Christ the Son of God, as the same God as God the Father, as the One who lives forever, is

speaking eternal things to us this simply.

So we can know what a great One Jesus is. That is why the Pharisees and the Jews who heard His word could not understand it, however much they tried to understand it with their heads. He was only thirty-one or thirty-two years old, yet He said, “God the Father is My Father. I am His Son. My Father and I are equally God,” and as they listened to His word, their heads became tangled. It was because they were hearing a word that could by no means be received by reason. That is why the Jews said that they must seize and kill Jesus. It was because if they let Him live, every time they heard His word it would become a riddle that could never be solved.

He speaks such words to us. As we hear His word, we come to know that Jesus is a great One. In the old days, when we thought of Jesus, we knew Him only as the Savior, but when we come to know the reality of Jesus, it is truly great. When I, too, go about in a jacket, in people’s eyes I look like an old man who has aged and can do nothing, but if they knew the work I actually do, they would not believe it.

If I said that I publish books like this and work with fellow workers all over the world, they would be surprised. They say, where is there anyone in our country who preaches the gospel worldwide? As far as they know, there is no one besides one or two widely known people. So there is no need even to say it. It is the same with you, too. You, too, serve this gospel and serve as the flower-calyx for this work. Who would know the work you do? Whether there are really people in this age who devote their lives to serving as the flower-calyx for the spread of God’s gospel, in an age when it is hard even to make one’s own living—it is unbelievable. It was the same with Jesus, too.

“He who hears My word and believes in Him who sent Me has everlasting life”

“Hears My word”—what words did Jesus speak to us? As we well know, *“I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me,” “unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God,”* I am God, equal with God the Father; I have come to this earth as the Son of God, as the Savior; I have come to this earth, according to the order of Melchizedek, as the Savior of mankind to do that work—what I am saying is, how many words like these He spoke! Jesus spoke a tremendous number of words, saying that He was baptized by John the Baptist and bore the sin of the world, died on the Cross, rose again on the third day after His death, and saved us.

The four Gospels of the New Testament are what Jesus spoke, and after them, following the Acts of the Apostles, come the epistles of the apostle Paul, and the rest is what the other disciples said; and the person who testified of Jesus in the greatest volume in the New Testament is the apostle Paul. Jesus spoke to us through the four Gospels of the New Testament and also through the Old Testament. So it is the word that he who hears His word and believes in Him who sent Him has everlasting life. It means that the person who has heard and believed the word He spoke, and has received the remission of sin, has everlasting life.

God the Father established Him by oath as the eternal Priest according to the order of Melchizedek. “You are the eternal Priest. I will send You to this earth as the eternal Priest.” It means that according to that oath, He came to this earth and took charge of the sins of mankind with the baptism He received from John the Baptist. And dying on the Cross, He said that it was

finished. It means that He tells us all that He has done. So He is now speaking this word, that if we hear and believe that word which our Lord speaks to us, we obtain eternal life according to the will of God the Father, we come to obtain a new life that never dies, and we come to live in the kingdom of heaven.

People regard the word of God as too simple, but when one comes to know it, it is a very deep word. For example, what the philosophers of the East and the West—Socrates, Plato, Confucius, and Mencius—say is understood at once when one hears it. Eastern philosophy teaches you not to show off before others, to act as if you were nothing, and says that otherwise many adversaries will arise who envy you and attack you. What those people realized is about that much. People listen carefully, thinking that they say such things because they have gone through all the hardships of life.

Socrates, too, said, know yourself. It means that we do not know ourselves and slander others, judge by following what others say, and puff ourselves up, saying we can do better than you, but that we should know, when we really come to know ourselves, how weak we are and how much sin we commit as human beings. With that one saying he became a great man, but in fact it is said that even that saying was not something he made up himself, but words he saw engraved in a temple and threw at people who showed off. But we were able to receive the remission of sin and obtain eternal life by seeing, hearing, and believing the word that records what our Lord spoke when He came to this earth, His accomplishing what He spoke, and what He did.

The fact that one who could only go to hell as the price of sin has been saved from sin means that Heaven is guaranteed

All of this was accomplished because of the love of God, in which God the Father made His own Son the Priest and sent Him in order to save you and me from sin. God the Father already knew that we, born as the descendants of Adam, would fall into sin and inherit sin and be people who could never escape from it. So He established His own Son as the eternal Priest, and that eternal Priest came to this earth, was baptized, and was crucified, and by offering His own body before God the Father as the eternal sacrifice, He removed all the sins of mankind. So it means that He led us to obtain salvation through faith. All this word is contained in the one verse, verse 24.

When people suffer an injustice, their hearts are appeased only when that injustice is resolved. People of old considered that when a person who had committed a great wrong paid the price of that sin with his own life, the heart of the person who had suffered the harm was appeased at the sight of it. That is the atonement people think of. God the Father is the same. A fallen angel enticed Adam and Eve to eat the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, which God had told them not to eat, and made them sinners, and human beings, uniting with Satan the devil, began to go against the word of God, so God had to judge the people who had sinned. But He did not execute that judgment on us; He made His own Son the eternal Priest, clothed Him in human flesh, had Him born of Mary, had Him baptized by John the Baptist, and had Him crucified. It is the word that through God the Father's Son dying on the Cross, saying that it was finished, the heart of God the Father, which was set on judging us for sin, was appeased.

“I meant to judge without fail, but because My Son was baptized by John, took charge of the sins of mankind, and was nailed to the Cross and died, I see that sight and My heart is appeased. Because My Son is God, He need only die and rise again.” So through the fact that Jesus Christ, who came as the Mediator between God and us, as the eternal Priest, was baptized and died on the Cross, the heart of God the Father, who wanted to judge in righteousness, was appeased and calmed. Because of sin we could not go before God and could not go to the kingdom of God, but through the sacrifice of Jesus Christ, who became our eternal Priest, the sin in our hearts was also settled and we became able to go before God the Father.

So the wall of separation between God the Father and us was broken down. So we became able to be united with Him. John chapter 5 records that Jesus Christ the Son of God became the eternal Priest, came to this earth to save you and me, spoke, accomplished what He spoke, and saved us through that event, and that by our believing in that salvation we have received the remission of sin and obtained eternal life.

In the last sermon I spoke of the part that Jesus is God, equal with God the Father. It means that God the Father settled that heart of His which wanted to judge your wrongs and mine by passing sin on to His own Son through the baptism He received from John and judging the Son, so that He did not have to judge you and me. If we are judged and die and go to eternal hell, that is the end of it. It is the word that He saved us so that we would not come to that. Is it not truly amazing, and something to be thankful for? I am thankful that God the Father made His own Son the eternal Priest according to the order of Melchizedek and saved you and me from sin and judgment. That is why God said, it is not that you loved Me, but that I loved you. I am thankful that He has prepared Heaven for us. Where is there for people to

go? The days ahead are a very gloomy time.

Let us say that a person was born and did something. He sang well, became a world-famous singer, and was respected until he grew old and died. But one day he died. What remains? He has simply vanished like that. He sang all his life until his throat wore out, delighting people's ears, and then departed without receiving the remission of sin. In our country, too, there was a certain singer who was famous for his husky voice. His songs were lively and pleasant to hear, but it was announced that he had suddenly departed this world at fifty-something. It turned out, they say, that the husky voice had come from a cancer in his vocal cords. What remained? His fame may have remained, but he only delighted people's ears and then departed.

If some person made a lot of money and gave to the needy, and then died without receiving the remission of sin, where would he go? What I am saying is, Jesus Christ, according to the order of Melchizedek, as the Son of God, as the eternal Priest, in order to offer His own body as the sacrifice before God the Father, was baptized by John, died on the Cross, rose again from the dead, and saved us from sin; but that person died without meeting that Jesus, so where would he have gone?

The wages of sin is death. If one has sin, one must unconditionally receive its price. It is one of the two: either we receive the price of sin, or we do not receive the judgment of sin by believing in the salvation of Jesus Christ, who became our eternal Priest and paid the price of sin in our place. We who believe have been saved from sin. So, having become saved people, when the time comes we go to the kingdom of heaven. Because we have somewhere to go in the future, our future is not gloomy. When the time comes to go, a better place is waiting for us, so we need only go. But for people who have nowhere to go in their lives and have nowhere to go but hell, if they live in a

gloomy and depressing world on this earth, too, how depressing that would be! So what I am saying is that we must be saved.

That Jesus became our Savior according to the order of Melchizedek originated in the plan by which God the Father, knowing before the foundation of the world that we would commit sin, established His own Son as the eternal Priest. God made you and me in the image of God, so as to make us His own people whom no creature could attack, and to have us live in the Father's kingdom within His love. What amazing love this is! What an amazing blessing this is! Our God, having such an amazing plan, had you and me born on this earth, gave His own Son as the sacrifice and saved us from sin and judgment, and let us live forever in the kingdom of God. So we cannot but be thankful.

If being saved from sin were the end of it, there would be no great difference, but going to live in the kingdom of God is true salvation. It is not salvation just because sin has disappeared. The fact that one who had to receive hell as the price of sin has been saved from sin means that Heaven is guaranteed. It is the word that one will live in Heaven. So what I am saying is, how good this is! Only, while we live on this earth we are merely faithful to the work entrusted to us; the life lived on this earth is not all there is. The pleasure or trouble of a day is sufficient for that day and does not go on forever. I do not know how thankful I am.

The resurrection of life and the resurrection of condemnation

Our Lord speaks in verse 25. Let us read it all together. *“Most assuredly, I say to you, the hour is coming, and now is, when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God; and those who hear will live.”* Were you and I not dead because of sin?

Though we were born from our mother's womb and lived on this earth, in fact we were in a spiritually dead state, a state cut off from God, but we heard the voice of the Son of God. We heard that voice, that gospel, that the Son of God came to save us and saved us like this, and by our faith we came alive again. Those who have come alive like this by hearing and believing the gospel of the water and the Spirit have new life in them, and now, though the body dies, the soul does not die.

And Jesus received the authority of judgment from God the Father. God the Father gave His own Son the authority of salvation, but He also gave Him the authority of judgment. So Jesus judges. Jesus judges the people who have not been saved. At the last, Jesus Christ will come again to this earth. And He will cause the rapture. When He says, come up to Me, the graves will split open and the born-again will be changed into resurrected bodies, spiritual bodies, and be raptured. This body as it is cannot be raptured. It means that just as the risen Jesus passed through walls, we will become changed bodies that are not bound by time and space, go to the kingdom of God, and live forever.

So those who have done good on this earth, that is, those who have believed in the salvation of Jesus Christ, take part in the first resurrection through the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil, that is, those who did not accept in their hearts but refused the love of salvation that Jesus Christ gave, come alive again a thousand years later through the resurrection of condemnation and go into the unquenchable fire. The word we have read today is such a word.

The salvation of God's love toward us has been accomplished in our hearts. How thankful, how thankful a thing it is! But there are still so many people in whom this has not been accomplished in their hearts. Why are these people pitiful? The people who do not know and do not believe the fact that Jesus,

as the Son of God, came as the eternal Priest and removed their sins with the baptism He received from John, the blood and the death of the Cross, and His resurrection, have sin in their hearts. Then they go to hell.

We must think over our own lives in Jesus Christ and give thanks

Dear fellow believers, why do we talk about Melchizedek? It is the word that, just as God had established His own Son as our Savior from before the foundation of the world, just as He had planned, when the time came He sent Him to this earth and saved us from sin and made us the children of God. This is because God said that when He made human beings, He made them in the image of God. It means that there was a purpose. The purpose of creation, the purpose of the creation by which He made human beings, was to make them the children of God so that they might live together with God forever, and to bless them—for this He made you and me. We must accept that through faith.

And we have the duty to preach this gospel to the people who still do not know the love of God, the people who do not know the fact that the Son of God became the eternal Priest. If we do not preach and these people go to hell without knowing, how unjust that would be! God, too, cannot judge them indiscriminately. He can judge them when we have preached the gospel of the water and the Spirit to them and they have understood it, whether through literature or through whatever means, and still do not believe. Not to believe means that one has taken the same side as the devil. The devil even now opposes God and refuses to serve Him and refuses to acknowledge Him.

In the same way, the people who do not accept in their hearts the fact that Jesus Christ the Son of God, who saved mankind from sin, came to this earth and saved us with the baptism He received from John, the blood and the death of the Cross, and His resurrection, are those who oppose God.

We must accept the providence of salvation that God has bestowed toward us, and His purpose and plan to make us the children of God through this process and bless us. “I did not know why I was born on this earth, but now I know. He had me born on this earth in order to save me like this.” When you were born on this earth, some of you were born in good circumstances, but there must also be many who were born in bad circumstances. In the process of growing up, too, there must have been many bad things and various sufferings. At such times there must also have been times when you resented why you had to be born into such a family and live like this. But it is the word that through such a process God made you seek God, let you know that Jesus Christ the Son of God became the eternal Priest and saved you, and let you be saved by believing that fact. It is the word that in order to give us this, God had you and me go through hardship for a little while. We must think over our own lives in Jesus Christ and give thanks.

Dear fellow believers, looking at your own life, I want you not to say, “Why do I live like this? Why do I still live like this even after being born again?” God has blessed you with tremendous things. What you will enjoy in the future is tremendously much. Know the will of the Lord, who has placed us in the church and made us do the flower-calyx work for a little while so that we may tell those who do not yet know this truth, and live within faith. I want you to do righteous work, receiving the help and blessing of God, and then meet the Lord. I will close the message here. ☒

Sermon 5 by Paul C. Jong

Jesus Christ, who is God, the only One whom we believe in and rely on

< John 5:39-47 >

“You search the Scriptures, for in them you think you have eternal life; and these are they which testify of Me. But you are not willing to come to Me that you may have life. I do not receive honor from men. But I know you, that you do not have the love of God in you. I have come in My Father’s name, and you do not receive Me; if another comes in his own name, him you will receive. How can you believe, who receive honor from one another, and do not seek the honor that comes from the only God? Do not think that I shall accuse you to the Father; there is one who accuses you—Moses, in whom you trust. For if you believed Moses, you would believe Me; for he wrote about Me. But if you do not believe his writings, how will you believe My words?”

“In them you think you have eternal life”

In verse 39 it says, *“You search the Scriptures, for in them you think you have eternal life; and these are they which testify of Me.”* Are you those who, thinking that you have eternal life

in the word of the Scriptures, look at the Scriptures, and have been saved by believing in Jesus Christ, who is revealed in the Scriptures? The Bible says so. When I look back on whether I, too, did so, I was able to meet Jesus while reading the Bible, and at first I knew only the Cross of Jesus, but later I came to know the gospel of the truth of the baptism of Jesus and the Cross and was saved. If we think about the historical background in which He spoke this word in John 5:39, the Jews believe only the Old Testament. This word is a word that includes even the New Testament, but at this time it was a word spoken about the Old Testament.

Jesus said this, and went on to say, *“But you are not willing to come to Me that you may have life” (John 5:40)*. He pointed out that although they thought they could obtain eternal life by reading the Scriptures and assumed they believed in God, they were not actually willing to come to Him to obtain eternal life.

Jesus, who does not receive honor from men

So Jesus speaks in verses 41 to 44. *“I do not receive honor from men. But I know you, that you do not have the love of God in you. I have come in My Father’s name, and you do not receive Me; if another comes in his own name, him you will receive. How can you believe, who receive honor from one another, and do not seek the honor that comes from the only God?”* It is truly an embarrassing word. Jesus said that He does not receive honor through people who believe in and follow Him because they like Him. In today’s terms, it is the word that He does not want to become a person like that, one who becomes a popular figure among people and a hero of the young.

Because people have no heart to love God and no heart to

want to believe in God, when someone says, “I have come as the Savior of mankind,” they believe in that person and believe in that religion. That is how Buddhism arose, Confucianism arose, Islam arose, and many religions arose. People looked to the founder of the religion, believed in him, and followed him, and so the founder received honor. But Jesus does not want people who believe in, follow, and give honor to Jesus because they like Jesus. It is the word that He wants people who obtain eternal life, not because they like Jesus, but by knowing and believing that Jesus is God and the Savior, and following Him.

Religions believed in because one likes their founder

Let us suppose that in the world there are Shakyamuni, Confucius, Socrates, and Jesus. Some people believe in Islam because they like Muhammad, and some people like Confucius and Mencius. Confucius, Mencius, and Xunzi are philosophers. They teach how ethics and morality should be in running a nation and how politics should be conducted, the Three Bonds and Five Relationships, friendship between friends, the duties of a subject, and the like. Some believe in Confucianism because they like Confucius. Some say that Shakyamuni is so admirable. They believe in Buddhism because they like that man who, as a prince, agonized over the birth, aging, sickness, and death of human beings and reached the state of enlightenment. And some say that Jesus is the Jesus of love, and so they believe in Jesus because they like Jesus. But it is the word that among those who believe like that, no one can obtain salvation.

Apart from Jesus, all the other people lived taking for themselves the honor of the cheers of those who liked them. But

Jesus alone was not so. “No matter how much you admire Me, I am not one to accept the glory you offer.” Why is that? It is because Jesus is the Savior of mankind and God. Who is the One who created heaven and earth? Who is the One who saves those who have fallen into sin? Who is the One who grants eternal life and the future Heaven? It is the word that that One is precisely Jesus Himself. It is the word that He is not a creature but God, and that the one who believes in Him receives the remission of sin, too, and obtains eternal life. “Do you not read the Scriptures, which I recorded through My servants, and discover Me there and believe in Me? Your obtaining salvation by believing in Me is giving glory to God the Father.” It is that He said this. For us today, both the Old Testament and the New Testament together testify of that Jesus.

Faith held according to one’s own taste is not salvation

To speak by exactly the same analogy, it means that among those who believe in Jesus, too, there are many people who follow a pastor who suits their own taste, and believe what that person says, and believe in Jesus. Among the many pastors of the world there are handsome pastors and ugly pastors, some who look clever and some who look like artists, and in temperament there are the hot-tempered and the extroverted—they are of every kind and shape. So when church members come to church, hear the word, and register, they register at that church and believe in the Jesus that person preaches, thinking, “Having heard the pastor of this church preach, he is a person who suits my taste. The way he speaks literarily, morally, and philosophically suits my taste.” Even if that pastor neither

preaches nor believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, even if he introduces Jesus as no more than one of the famous sages of the world, there are people who say that because the pastor suits their taste, they come to this church and believe in the Jesus this person preaches to them.

In our church, too, it is all different. Some people say that when they have dealt with this Pastor Jong at close quarters, he is a decent person, and some say that he seems a very strict person. Humanly, one may like me or one may not like me. But there are people who come to this church and believe, thinking, “The gospel of the water and the Spirit that I preach, the Jesus that man preaches, that alone is the truth; he speaks the true word. Therefore, setting aside that man’s appearance and character and everything else, I believe in that Jesus of whom that man speaks as my Savior.”

But there are many people who live a religious life even while coming to the Church of God. They choose the pastor themselves, and they choose Jesus themselves, too. There are people who believe only in Jesus who was crucified, and there are many who say, “I believe only in the God of love,” because Jesus, though at times He spoke harsh words such as, brood of vipers, spoke many gentle words. Such people do not receive salvation however much they believe in Jesus. It is because they believe in a religious leader who suits their taste, a savior who suits their taste. So what I am saying is that the people who discover the Jesus Christ revealed in the Bible, discover that Savior who has removed our sins, and believe and obtain salvation, are extremely few.

On the last day, to the people who say, “Did I not prophesy in the Lord’s name, cast out demons, do many wonders, and become a person of high name by being faithful in the church? Then why does the Lord say that He does not know me?” the

Lord says, “I never knew you; depart from Me.” Many people who believed in Jesus believed in Jesus according to their own taste. Jesus did not receive that honor just because people liked Him; He sought the glory of God, saved from sin those who believe the fact that God the Father sent Jesus to this earth, and gave glory to God. And they were saved by believing in Jesus.

And He said, did you believe the Old Testament? Moses recorded the Pentateuch of Moses—Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy—and it is all written there. It is the word that salvation is written there, how I would come to this earth and save is written there, and what sin is, too, is all written there, so that if you had believed, you would have believed in Me as the Savior, but you do not believe.

Those who went to church because they liked people

Dear fellow believers, even within this church, which preaches the gospel of the water and the Spirit, there are many people who believe according to their own taste. “When a certain pastor who was the guide before was here, just looking at him was a blessing. He looked intellectual and warm, his words were gentle, and his voice was good, so what he said sounded like a melody of love. So I believed in the Jesus he preached to me, and I still believe that way now. But one day a certain man named Jong came and preached the word, and though he seems to be a person who preaches the word properly and believes, he does not suit my taste. So I still believe in that Jesus who was preached to me long ago, and I am living my life of faith.” Then, after much time had passed, it was revealed that his faith was not salvation. It is that it was revealed that he did not believe in Jesus

as his own Savior. However much he tries to believe in Jesus, he cannot believe in his heart, and Jesus is neither lovable nor worthy of respect to him. Such people appear.

I saw a certain young man who had come home on leave from the army with a stiff, tense look on his face and shoulders. Thinking that something might have made him angry or that there might be some problem in his heart, I told the brothers not to say anything to him but to treat him well, and to treat him with that much respect since he was no longer a private. Then that young man finally spoke, saying that he could not believe in God. He said that he had never been able to believe from the beginning. He said that he did not believe in Jesus, but wanted to go out into society, succeed, and live a happy life. Then how had he been in the church until now? He had merely been there because circumstances turned out that way. Is it only that young man? It is not. It is a confession that he was there because he liked this church and liked the people, but that he could not believe in Jesus as the Savior. If a person cannot believe that the baptism Jesus received and the blood of the Cross are the gospel that saved him, the problem is serious. That person believed because he liked people.

In this world some people believed in Buddhism because they liked Siddhartha, some believed in Confucianism because they liked Confucius and Mencius, and some believed in Islam because they liked Muhammad. Some people, because the pastor of a certain church suits their taste in appearance, eloquence, and thought, and because they like that person regardless of whether that person has been saved or not, come to the church that person pastors and believe in Jesus. But if one believed not because one liked Jesus but because one liked a person, that is not salvation. Then one goes to hell. What I am saying is that people like this are not just one or two in this world. Jesus is telling the Jews this

story. It is that you do not come before Me in order to believe in Me; you do search the Scriptures, but you do not come to Me, of whom those Scriptures testify, in order to obtain eternal life.

It is the word that asks, are you not now fond of Moses? The Moses the Jews picture is probably a figure like the leading actor in the film *The Ten Commandments*. He is of large build and handsome, with a mighty voice, and has the bearing of a leader before whom one's head bows of itself. They like that style. But Jesus is like a root out of dry ground, having no form or comeliness, and there is nothing in His appearance that one should desire Him. It is exactly as the word says in Isaiah chapter 53. So, saying that in their eyes there was nothing to believe in, even though Jesus had come, they did not believe in Jesus as the Savior but believed in Judaism. Even now, among the many people who come to church, there are those who have believed until now, not truly believing in Jesus, but because they like other people, other pastors, or denominations that use the name of Jesus as a pretext.

Now the real problem has broken out. When one asks, am I really one who believes in Jesus, do I love Jesus, the answer is that Jesus is not lovable. Why is that? It is because one thinks of Jesus as a human being. When one looks at the human Jesus, He is not an ugly person, but neither is He sleek and handsome like a movie star, like a peeled chestnut. It is because one likes sleek and handsome people, and Jesus is not such a person. But though He is One whose appearance, in the eyes of everyone, has nothing to be desired, there are many people who believe in Jesus because, when they hear His word, it contains the word of life, and He is the One who solves the problem of the soul, removes the sin of the heart, comforts the heart, and gives eternal life.

But it is that even within the Church of God there are many

people who believe in Jesus because they like people. There were many people who believed in Jesus because they liked people, because they liked a community in which people love one another and live for one another. So that there is no heart to love Jesus in one's own heart—that becomes the greatest problem. How can a person love Jesus? Does one love Him by looking at His appearance? We have never even seen that appearance. And however handsome He may have been, if He were not God and not the Savior, what use would that be to us? It would be nothing but a fine-looking but worthless apricot.

It is God whom we believe in

The reason we believe in Jesus is, first, because Jesus is God, who created heaven and earth. Second, it is because He is our Savior, and third, it is because He is the One who has given us eternal life. There is no other reason at all. If we believe because He is handsome, has much money, has much power, and blesses us and loves us, that is all vanity. If He were not the Creator, we could not believe in Him. It is because if He were not the Creator, He would have no power to save us from sin.

But what is clear is that in the beginning God created heaven and earth. When God said by His word, let the earth bring forth fruit trees that yield seed, grass came out of the earth and fruit trees came out and yielded seed and bore fruit. The One who did so is Jesus. When He said, let there be light, there was light, and there were the sun and the moon and the stars, and when He said, let there be all kinds of fish in the sea, all kinds of fish came into being. Some are so beautiful in their form that if they were put into a picture it would be a masterpiece, some are great whales, and some are very small and marvelous. And He made man of

the dust. Did not the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit together make man and breathe the breath of life into his nostrils, so that we are alive now? And when we sinned, He promised that He would save us with a sacrifice that would pay the price of our sins, and as He promised, God the Father sent His own Son to this earth, had Him born, had Him baptized, had Him crucified, and had Him die and rise again, and made Him our Savior.

Is not the One who saved us from sin God? The word Jesus means the Savior, and the word Christ means the Anointed One, that is, that God did this work and saved us. So it is the word that Jesus is God clothed in human flesh. We believe in Jesus, but what we really believe in is God. We are those who believe in God, not those who believe in the human Jesus. The reason the Jews did not accept Jesus was that, they said, You are no better than Moses and have not even given the Law, yet You keep saying You are the Son of God, so it turns our stomachs and we cannot believe. But Jesus is God, the Creator, and the very same God as God the Father. To give an analogy, just as the child of a human being is still a human being, so the Son of God the Father is equally our God. It is because we are His creatures.

For us to believe in Jesus is to believe in God. We are those who believe in God the Creator, those who believe in Jesus Christ the Son of God, whom God the Father sent to save all mankind from sin when our ancestors fell into sin, those who believe in Jesus, who is our God, and those who have been saved through faith. But because people think of Jesus as a human being, even though they believe, they are not saved and have no heart to want to love Him, and they say, “I want to believe in a gentler God than God the Creator.” Jesus is the God of truth, not One who is merely gentle unconditionally. The God who is gentle and yet righteous, honest, the truth, and true—that God is the One we believe in. It is the word that we are not those who

believe that a Jesus who has only the gentleness that appears in human beings is our God. But what I am saying is that even among us, even among those who believe in Jesus, there are many such people.

As I said a while ago, there are people who say that this church was wonderful in the old days. There was a time in this church when, after finishing the worship service, people promoted fellowship together, drank liquor together, went out on excursions and sang the popular songs of the world and beat the jangu and the drum, and yet believed in Jesus, and, because they liked that gathering, even brought their friends along. Those who were absorbed in that cannot forget it and want to do so even now. But did He not say that we cannot serve two masters? Though it suits the taste of the flesh and is pleasant, because the Lord dislikes it, the church laid it down and changed into a church that lives for the joy of eating good food, loving one another, and living for the Lord. So they dislike that. The Lord is not lovable to them. But the important thing is that they do not believe that Jesus is God. If one believes in God, one believes in Jesus. Because the One in whom God revealed Himself is Jesus, we have become those who are saved by believing in that God—the God of love, the God of salvation, the righteous God, who is also our Creator, who also removes our sins, who was also sacrificed for us, who also gives us eternal life, and who is also with us.

Jesus, who gives the food of life

Let us read John 6:10 to 14. *“Then Jesus said, ‘Make the people sit down.’ Now there was much grass in the place. So the men sat down, in number about five thousand. And Jesus took*

the loaves, and when He had given thanks He distributed them to the disciples, and the disciples to those sitting down; and likewise of the fish, as much as they wanted. So when they were filled, He said to His disciples, ‘Gather up the fragments that remain, so that nothing is lost.’ Therefore they gathered them up, and filled twelve baskets with the fragments of the five barley loaves which were left over by those who had eaten. Then those men, when they had seen the sign that Jesus did, said, ‘This is truly the Prophet who is to come into the world.’” Jesus is the One who performed the office of the Prophet and the office of the Savior, and He was God.

The Jews, following Jesus about after seeing His miracles and wonders, gathered on a hillside where there was much grass. While they were gathered to hear the word of Jesus and to see whether He would again perform wonders and miracles, they were hungry. Noon had passed and the sun was about to go down, and if they heard the word and went home, it could be night. So Jesus asked Philip, where shall we buy bread, that these may eat? Philip said that two hundred denarii worth of bread would not be sufficient for them, that every one of them might have a little, and Andrew said that there was a lad here who had five barley loaves and two fish, but what were they among so many? The number of those who sat down alone was about five thousand, so including the women and children there must have been far more than that. It happened that a lad had brought one lunch box, and in it there were two fish and five barley loaves. Jesus had the people sit down on the grass, had that lunch box brought to Him, and looked up to heaven and gave thanks. Then it multiplied abundantly, and He had it put into baskets and all distributed so that no quarrel would break out, and what was left over after all had eaten filled twelve baskets.

Dear fellow believers, there are two kinds of food. They are

the food of the soul and the food of the body. As for the food of the body, once one has eaten, its effect lasts only a few hours, so one must eat again every day for the body to be sustained. And there is the food of the soul. Even though one has lived diligently and made efforts in this world and enjoyed wealth and blessing, the heart is somehow hollow and distressed, and one's sins come to mind. So one must eat the food of the soul, which gives the remission of sin, but who gives this food? The food of life is in Jesus. Many people who had eaten the food of the body followed Jesus, but Jesus rebuked them. He said, do you follow Me because you ate of the loaves and were filled? Do not labor for the food which perishes, but for the food which endures to everlasting life. What is the food that does not perish? It is the word that believing in Me is laboring for that food. Then the many people who had been following Jesus about were disappointed and left Jesus.

Who is the One who has given you the food of life by which you can live this day? Is it not Jesus? Did not Jesus become the bread of life and come to this earth clothed in human flesh, receive our sins passed on to His own body by being baptized, die on the Cross and rise again, wash our sins as white as snow, and make our souls live? That Jesus has become the food of our life. However much we eat the food of the body, if we do not eat the food of life, our hearts are hollow and we cannot live. The One who lets us live each day, keeps us from being distressed because of sin, lets us praise God, and makes our hearts glad and at peace is Jesus. The One who gives the food of life and the One who gives new life are both Jesus. He is God Himself in essence. God has come as the Savior and is even now giving us the food of life every day. It is that by believing in Him we have received the remission of sin, become the people of God, become the children of God, and become those who will do the work of God,

enter the kingdom of God, and live enjoying eternal life together with Him.

So is not that Jesus One who is worthy of our faith? Because He is God, He is worthy of our faith and worthy of our reliance, and His having removed our sins is worthy of our faith. So what I am saying is, is He not the God who lets us obtain salvation by believing, and lets us receive and enjoy the food of the body, peace of heart, and every blessing even while we live on this earth? Then why do you not believe in that God? Why is He not lovable? If that God is not lovable, it is because the devil has come into that heart, coiled itself up, and is playing the master. It is the word that only after driving out the devil that is in one's heart in the name of Jesus Christ can one love Jesus. Is Jesus not One who is worthy of love? Is He not everything in our souls, hearts, lives, and circumstances? Everything comes through God, and we enjoy it. Then what is there that is not lovable?

Jesus is God the Creator

Is it because you regard Him as one of the four great sages that you hesitate over whether or not to believe in Jesus? Do you come to this church because you like the pastor, the evangelists, and the brothers and sisters of this church? One comes to the Church of God in order to believe in God. For a person who does not believe in God, however much he believes in Jesus, it is not salvation. It is because he thinks of Him and believes in Him as a human being. Our believing in Jesus is believing in God, not believing in the human Jesus. As it turns out, He was the Creator. It says that the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and that all things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made. "Him" is a word attached to the One who

alone is the one and only. Is He not our God? He is God, equal with God the Father, and God, equal with the Holy Spirit. The Triune God is our God. It is that this God revealed Himself through Jesus Christ, whom He sent as the Savior, and loved us so.

God so loved the world—it is God who loved us, not a human being who loved us. If there are ten million people in our country who believe in Jesus, among them those who know and believe in Jesus as God are a very tiny minority. The rest have believed in the Jesus of love, believed in a religion, believed the words of philosophers, and believed the words of false men. So those people cannot become the light of the world. To those who believe that Jesus is God and our Savior, He said, you are the light of the world. We are the light of the world. Do not people receive the remission of sin through this word of the gospel that we preach? Though we suffer much hardship, are not the peoples of many countries saved because we serve this gospel and play the flower-calyx role? A while ago the Mongolian-language book was translated and put up as an e-book, and if those people come in and read it and believe that Jesus is God and the Savior and has saved us by the water and the Spirit, they become those who are saved.

Dear fellow believers, we must believe in God. We must believe in Jesus Christ, who is God, whom Moses handed down to us. So we obtain salvation. The Jews, too, must believe in that way. Now the Jews believe only in the LORD God, but Jesus Christ the Son of that God is the same God. We must believe in God, who came as the Savior. Only God can save human beings from sin. Only God can make human beings happy. Then why do you absurdly believe in a human being?

“You search the Scriptures, for in them you think you have eternal life; and these are they which testify of Me.” Jesus said

this. Who is Jesus? Is He not God? Is He not the Creator? So we must not believe in Jesus by looking at a pastor's face, or believe by listening only to a pastor's words, but must believe by searching the Scriptures. We must look at the word and discern whether that pastor is one who preaches according to the word, or a person who, without even knowing the word, insists only on human love, friendship, and respect; and if he is not, we must get out of there. We must reject him. "The gospel you preach is not the true gospel of the water and the Spirit. Without His having taken charge of our sins, how can you say that He saved us by the Cross alone? If Jesus is not God, how can one obtain salvation?" Among the many denominations of this world there are denominations that believe that Jesus is God, but there are also denominations that do not believe in Jesus as God but believe He is a human being. In Islam, too, they believe that Jesus is a prophet like Muhammad, one among human beings.

But Jesus is the Absolute One. He is the Savior who spoke from the time He made the universe in the beginning, who made the universe with the word He spoke, who was there when He made man of the dust, who was there when He breathed the breath of life into his nostrils, who knew it all when mankind sinned, who Himself spoke when He said that He would save us with a sacrifice, who, when the time came, was born on this earth in a small village called Bethlehem in the nation of Israel, borrowing the body of the virgin Mary, who was baptized when He was thirty years old, and who was crucified, rose again from the dead, and saved us. Because that Savior is God, it means that the holy God became incarnate, was clothed in human flesh, and saved us from sin. So we have become those who are saved by believing in Jesus Christ, who is God.

That a heart that does not love Jesus, a heart that loves only the world and people, and a rebellious heart rise up is because

the devil has settled in that heart. One must drive it out, saying, “In the name of Jesus Christ I command you, Satan, be gone.” The person who does not love Jesus and does not accept the fact that Jesus is God and that He came to this world and saved us by the water and the blood has an evil spirit in his heart. Then he goes to hell. One must drive out that devil in the name of Jesus Christ. If one commands in the name of Jesus, it retreats. It is because Jesus is God and all the rest are creatures. So we must become those who obtain salvation by believing in Jesus, follow the Lord by faith, and serve by faith. I will close the message here. ☒

◇ About the Next Series

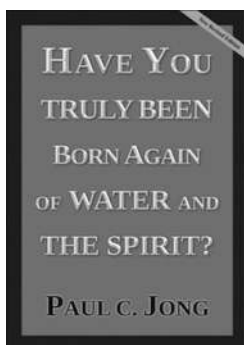
The '*Biblical Exposition & Sermon Series from the Perspective of the Gospel of the Water and the Spirit*' will continue to be published following this book.

We sincerely hope that the books by Pastor Paul C. Jong, which will continue to be published, will serve as spiritual nourishment to strengthen your faith.

News about newly released books, as well as various ways to access them—including eBooks (PDF, EPUB), audiobooks (M4A, MP3), and online reading—can be found at **www.bjnewlife.org**.

Paul C. Jong's Sermons

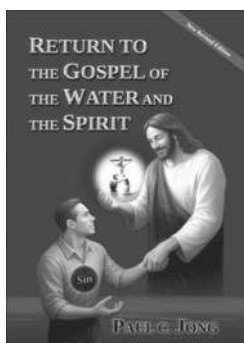
HAVE YOU TRULY BEEN BORN AGAIN OF WATER AND THE SPIRIT? [New Revised Edition]



Among many Christian books written about being born again, this is the first book of our time to preach the gospel of the water and the Spirit in strict accordance with the Scriptures. Man can't enter the Kingdom of Heaven without being born again of water and the Spirit. To be born again means that a sinner is saved from all his lifelong sins by believing in the baptism of Jesus and His blood of the Cross. Let's believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit and enter the Kingdom of Heaven as the righteous who have no sin.



RETURN TO THE GOSPEL OF THE WATER AND THE SPIRIT [New Revised Edition]

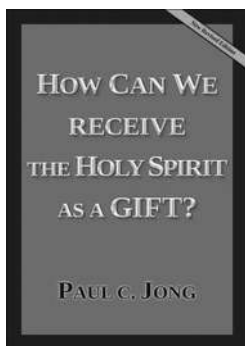


Let's return to the gospel of the water and the Spirit. Theology and doctrines themselves can't save us. However, many Christians still follow them, and consequently have not been born again yet. This book clearly tells us what mistakes theology and doctrines have made and how we can believe in Jesus in the most accurate and certain way.



Scan the QR code to view the book's details!

HOW CAN WE RECEIVE THE HOLY SPIRIT AS A GIFT? [New Revised Edition]

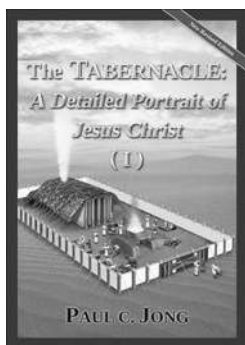


In Christianity, the most significantly discussed issue is salvation from sins and the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. However, few people have the exact knowledge of these two topics. Nevertheless, in reality people say that they believe in Jesus Christ while they are ignorant of true redemption and the Holy Spirit.

Do you know the true gospel that makes you receive the Holy Spirit? If you want to ask God for the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, then you must first know the gospel of the water and the Spirit and have faith in it. This book will certainly lead all Christians worldwide to receive the Holy Spirit through the washing away of all their sins.



The TABERNACLE : A Detailed Portrait of Jesus Christ (I) [New Revised Edition]



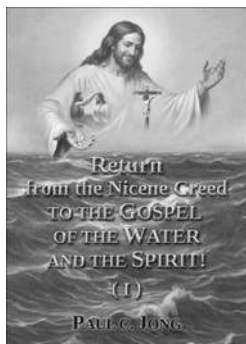
How can we find out the truth hidden in the Tabernacle? Only by knowing the gospel of the water and the Spirit, the real substance of the Tabernacle, can we correctly understand and know the answer to this question.

In fact, the blue, purple, and scarlet thread and the fine woven linen manifested in the gate of the Tabernacle's court show us the works of Jesus Christ in the New Testament's time that have saved the mankind. In this way, the Old Testament's Word of the Tabernacle and the Word of the New Testament are closely and definitely related to each other, like fine woven linen. But, unfortunately, this truth has been hidden for a long time to every truth seeker in Christianity.

Coming to this earth, Jesus Christ was baptized by John and shed His blood on the Cross. Without understanding and believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, none of us can ever find out the truth revealed in the Tabernacle. We must now learn this truth of the Tabernacle and believe in it. We all need to realize and believe in the truth manifested in the blue, purple, and scarlet thread and the fine woven linen of the gate of the Tabernacle's court.



Return from the Nicene Creed TO THE GOSPEL OF THE WATER AND THE SPIRIT! (I)



-Why must we return from the Nicene Creed to the gospel of the water and the Spirit? –

The 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.

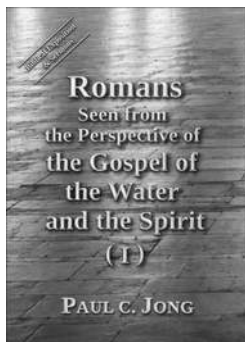
However, in the process of the Nicene Creed's formation, the ministry of Jesus having the sin of the world transferred to Him by being baptized by John was deleted from the creed's contents. As a result, this truth has been passed down in a hidden state within Christianity for about 1,700 years, reaching 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,

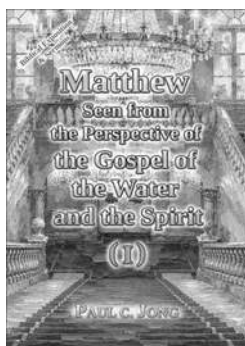
A person who embraces the gospel of the water and the Spirit in their heart comes to read Romans completely differently. The moment one opens this letter holding onto the gospel that Jesus had the sins of the world transferred to Him by receiving baptism from John, completely received the judgment of 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)

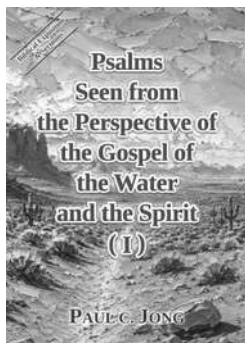


Why does sin still remain in your heart, even after believing in Jesus, reading the Bible for years, and attending church faithfully? Through Matthew chapters 1–4, this book answers clearly from the perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit.

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.

Psalm seen from the perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit (I)

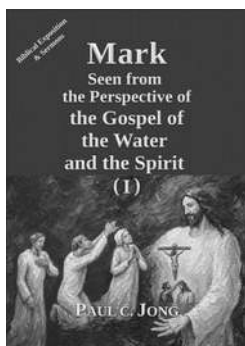


For long ages the Psalms have been the prayer book and the hymnal of the saints. Yet if we read them only as beautiful religious poetry or as an expression of emotion, we easily miss the meaning of these songs of praise. For David's laments and praises ultimately point to Jesus Christ, the Savior who 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)

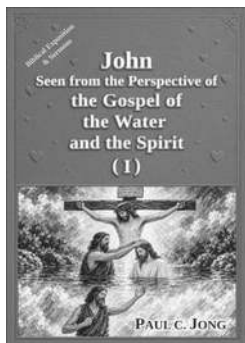


Who do you believe Jesus to be? Through Mark chapters 1–4, this book testifies to the beginning of the gospel, the Lord's authority to remit sins, and the ground of the heart that hears the Word.

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.

John Seen from the Perspective of the Gospel of the Water and the Spirit (4-Volume Series)

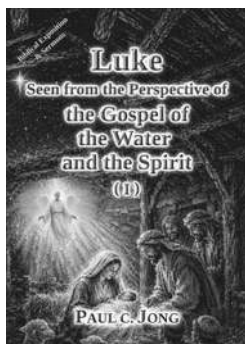


John seen from the perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit (I) is a book that examines, through the entire Gospel of John, how the Word, who is God, came to this earth clothed in flesh and saved sinners from sin.

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)

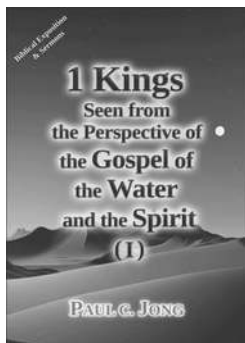


“*Luke Seen from the Perspective of the Gospel of the Water and the Spirit (I)*” expounds the Word from Luke chapters 1 through 6 from the perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit. Each chapter is composed of three parts: Biblical Exposition, Questions and Answers, and Sermons. The central 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.



1 Kings seen from the perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit (4-Volume Series)

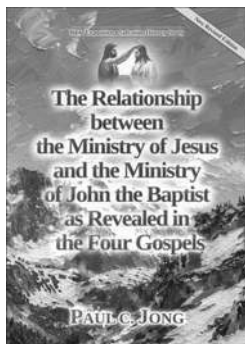


Why did Solomon, who received great wisdom from God, spend more time building his own palace than the Temple? Through David's old age and Adonijah's fall, and Solomon's accession and the building of the Temple, 1 Kings chapters 1–7 show that the glory of man fades, but the faith that fears God endures 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

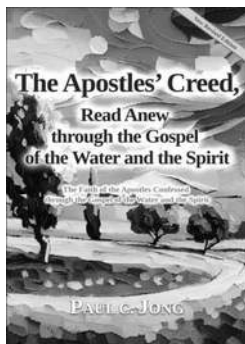
Why do the four Gospels introduce John the Baptist before speaking of Jesus' public ministry? Matthew records the baptism by which He fulfilled all righteousness; Mark, the messenger who prepared the way; Luke, the birth into a priestly family; and John, the testimony of the Lamb who takes away the sin 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.

Paul C. Jong's Special Features

The Apostles' Creed, Read Anew through the Gospel of the Water and the Spirit [New Revised Edition]

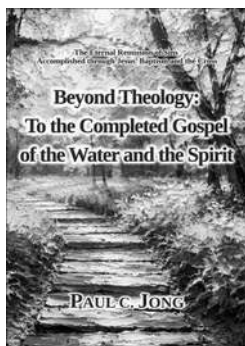


As you recite the Apostles' Creed every week, have you ever asked whether its statements are consistent with the gospel of the water and the Spirit proclaimed in the Bible? Countless Christians recite the Apostles' Creed, yet live without assurance as to whether they themselves have received the remission of sins and been born again.

This book examines this confession of faith, shaped and refined by people, article by article in the light of the "gospel of the water and the Spirit" to which Scripture testifies. In the light of this gospel—the gospel in which Jesus took upon Himself all the sins of the world by being baptized by John, bore the judgment for sin in our place by shedding His blood and dying on the Cross, and completed salvation by rising from the dead on the third day—this book points out what the Apostles' Creed leaves out.

The aim of this book is not to help the reader recite the Creed more skillfully. "Have I truly been born again through the gospel of the water and the Spirit?" When we come to answer this question through the Word, we will at last offer a living confession as those who have received the remission of sins and been born again.

Beyond Theology: To the Completed Gospel of the Water and the Spirit



Even as we confess that we have been saved, why does the weight of sin still remain in one corner of our hearts?

Countless saints live carrying this question. Each denomination has a different answer, but the Bible testifies to one story from beginning to end.

This book does not belong to any denomination. It sets out what each tradition—Calvinism, Lutheranism, Methodism, Catholicism, and others—teaches, acknowledges their contributions, and then brings them all before the gospel of the water and the Spirit. It is the gospel by which Jesus bore the sins of the world through the baptism He received from John, was judged on the Cross, and completed our eternal salvation through His resurrection from death.

This book does not condemn any church. It only invites you to lay down your familiar theology for a moment and to discover anew, before the gospel of the water and the Spirit, where unshakable assurance begins.

Visit our website to discover this and other Christian books,
available as e-books (PDF/EPUB) and audiobooks.

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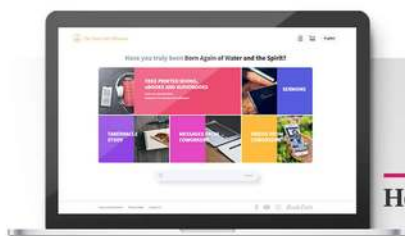
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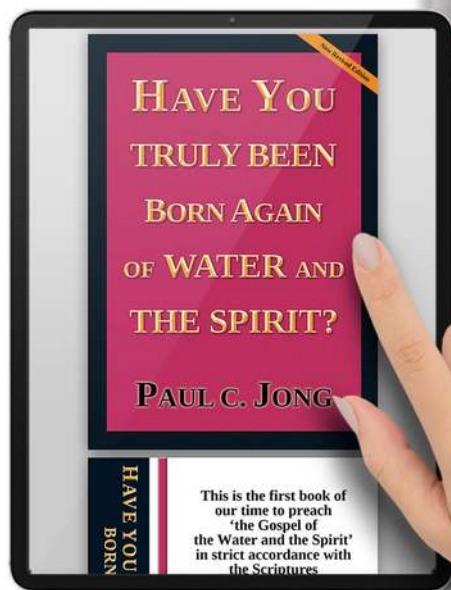
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Our The New Life Mission is distributing Pastor Paul C. Jong's spiritual books in 'printed book' form through coworkers who have been born again by water and the Spirit.

If you wish to possess printed books to build up spiritual nourishment, or if you sincerely wish to participate in our gospel spreading ministry, please apply by writing your reason, name, contact information, and address to the email address below.

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Please help us spread the true gospel of Jesus Christ through our books so that more people can be born again of the water and the Spirit. We would also be grateful if you could introduce our website and books to many people and invite them to visit.

THE NEW LIFE MISSION

Contact: John Shin, General Secretary

E-mail: newlife@bjnewlife.org



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We pray that you will live a victorious life through God's blessings in these last days within the gospel of the water and the Spirit.

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www.bjnewlife.org

Sincerely,
The New Life Mission



Pastor PAUL C. JONG

Currently, Pastor Paul C. Jong leads ‘The New Life Mission’, where he and his fellow workers are spreading the gospel of the water and the Spirit.

Although he believed in the crucified Jesus, he suffered for a long time because his problem of sin remained unresolved. In the midst of this agony, he came to believe that Jesus took upon Himself the sins of the world through His baptism by John the Baptist, and subsequently bore the judgment in our place on the cross.

For the past 40 years since then, he has been preaching the gospel of the water and the Spirit to those who only believe in the cross, documenting his actual sermons in writing. The compilation of these manuscripts has given rise to today’s ‘Biblical Exposition Series from the Perspective of the Gospel of the Water and the Spirit.’

His works, comprising an ongoing 100-volume series, have been translated into more than 110 languages and are read in over 160 countries. E-books and audiobooks are available for free at www.bjnewlife.org, while physical books can be purchased on Amazon.

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

The Gospel of 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.